

FANTASY



I always loved this solitary hill,

* * * * *

* seated here, in contemplation lost,
My thought discovers vaster space beyond
Supernal silence and unfathomed peace;
Almost I am afraid; then, since I hear
The murmur of the wind among the leaves,
I match that infinite calm unto this sound
And with my mind embrace eternity,
The vivid, speaking present and dead past;
In such immensity my spirit drowns,
And sweet to me is shipwreck in this sea.

—Leopardi

FANTASY *A Literary Quarterly*

WITH AN EMPHASIS ON POETRY

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Announcements

This issue's prize poem is the work of Lewis H. Fenderson, a Pittsburgh Negro of twenty-nine years. He received his education at Northwestern University and the University of Pittsburgh, and is an accomplished musician, having studied violin under Joseph Grecco. He has made little effort to publish his verse in magazines, although the near future promises a book collection. He is a contributor to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and formerly conducted a poetry column in the same paper, one of the most prominent newspapers of the colored race.

We feel ourselves fortunate to have secured the aid of James Weldon Johnson as judge in the Negro contest. Mr. Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Fla., and educated at Atlanta and Columbia Universities, practising law until his removal to New York in 1901. In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him as consul at Puerto Cabello, Venezuela, transferring him, three years later, to Corinto, Nicaragua. From this service he resigned in 1914 in order to devote himself to writing. His various offices, which are too numerous to mention, and his extensive literary work, embracing poetry, criticism, autobiography, novel, and Spiritual editing, constitute probably the greatest single service ever done the colored race in this country.

The topic for our next contest is to be "Prisons". The poem may be descriptive or a philosophical treatment of incarceration. Any line of thought or poetic vehicle is acceptable. The contribution must as before keep within thirty lines and be received here by September 20th. The award remains five dollars.

RECOMPENSE

LEWIS H. FENDERSON

It does have one advantage,
This being black,
It means one must possess
A sturdy back—
A lithe lean back,
Sinewed well of steel,
A brawny back
That ground beneath the heel
Will surge upright
In smooth determined power,
Tasting no ill defeat conceding the hour.

Almost ludicrous, this irony,
Caucasians are themselves their deity.

Withal,
It does have one advantage,
This being black,
It means one must possess
A good strong back.

LINES TO UNA

SARA BARD FIELD

Lady of cool Pacific gray,
Yours is the dripping day.
By blood to you belong
Dew's silver silence and rain's silver song.
Reject not yours, I pray.

Take winds for gown, for cloak, take fogs;
Take orchis from the bogs
To deck your halo-braid,
And veil yourself in vapor overlaid
With lichens from damp logs.

Such take for wear, and these
For nothing save to please:
From under water, fins,
From under earth, moles' gloom-soft, sober skins,
And bark from birchen trees;

Breast feathers of the albatross,
Starred dandelion floss,
The backs of olive leaves,
The weathered fray from wattled cottage eaves
And shells of oyster gloss.

Take tidal homage, winter-loud,
The praiseful look from cloud
In gay or serious skies.
Because these find their color in your eyes,
Let them be proud!

ARMOR

JOHN RUSSELL MCCARTHY

Light that pierced ten thousand years
Is blinded by a hair;
The cosmic ray is tangled in
So thin a net as air;—
What spider ramparts shield the gods
Against the wounds of prayer?

LONGUM ILLUD TEMPUS

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

That long time, Darling, when I shall not be
Moves me more deeply than this swift, this brief
Life on this Earth, brings crueler grief
Than death itself to me.

Death once endured there is life beyond and bliss,
If spent with you. But if the soul is blown
Into the dark, extinguished and alone,
What anodyne for this?

What consolation now for eyes that gaze
Along the endless ages of this strange Earth
Of changing generations, birth,
And the insoluble ways

Wherein I walk no more? The heart goes slow
With that great contemplation, it grows sick
Looking through darkness with a wick
That smokes and will not glow.

What shall we do, Anita, to mitigate
The pangs that come from the courageous word
That Earth is all? What dream averred
Can any strength regenerate?

There is but one to make the swift sands gleam:
Love me for life, and let me fill your cup
With love, then let us drink it up,
Our lips together on the brim.

SHALLOW POOL AND BOG

JOSEPH JOEL KEITH

The fools who count their virtues look
into a mirror. As they flit,
they see bright plumage. Watch the brook:
a grey weak thing is over it.

But fools who count their vices croak
in murky places like a frog.
Gaze not in shallow pools, and cloak
the heart when entering a bog.

SPINSTER: OLD

FRANK MARSHALL DAVIS

Phonograph brained
Repeatedly playing cracked records
Of turkey trot thoughts;
Her body a battered
Un-tuned gin mill piano
On which she discordantly plucks
Wagnerian compositions in clothing;
Now half-heartedly seeking
A male Stradivarius
Yielding yellow silken sound
At touch of the violin bow
Of her love

Warping
Splintering
From years of use
Is her voice
Bridging the private chasm
Between self and world
Becoming
A path for stumbling
Under-nourished words

All else
Is no bigger than a pea
The universe lies
In her goldfish bowl
There
She sleeps, wakes, eats
Swims aimlessly
Marking time
Until one day
She floats
Belly upward
Dead.

I found the crumpled petals of a yucca
last night in the pocket of my jacket.
Once, after canoeing up a river,
I put my hand in my pocket
and found a crumpled water-lily;
and I remembered it, because it was the same velvet,
and the outside of the outside petal
was the same dark maroon
dusted with gray.

This spring is going, too.
I had hoped the tulip with the cup of flame
might stay forever; but it has gone,
and the last iris fades into the dusk.

You gave me a drawing of Robert's, called *The Dance*.
"How do you know so well what I like?" I asked you,
and you replied, "You always like ruins
with trees growing out of them
and people dancing and picnicking on them."

Fate distills us; you are right.
Suffering is a looking glass
for reflections we should not see otherwise.

It is true that I love trees growing on ruins,
and music and dancing under the leaves:
nothing is more fecund than ruins.

This spring will soon be crumpled petals in a pocket.

I am making a new music out of new feelings
for this June evening under the deep trees
of an earth, of a life, that is all ruins.

A CHARM

JOHN PEALE BISHOP

Chicamy—chicamy—crany—crow

If the sun recover
Each girl shall have a lover,
Boys ease their blood
In the gay laurel wood.

Chicamy—chicamy—crany—crow

Shall be seen, both day and night,
Symptoms of a flushed delight.
All shall have simplicity
Faith and fame of chastity.

I went to the well to wash my toe

What time is it, old witch?

WINTER ARCHES

WINFIELD TOWNLEY SCOTT

At the low tide of the year before the white,
Before the clean ascent to winter, here
On the chill shore stand—to the hard beach
Driven; for the land behind us burns with fall
And hills smoke under the brazen sun.

We have come, as to the last rim of earth,
The world a waste at our backs, the summer
Gone down, and its laughter stopped. The gray
Sky is a hammock of silence, it sags low
Into the sea, and rocks to a long sleep.

The only sound in the marsh is the wind lying
Down, and cicadas dying; the crickets cheerier
As the light runs out, dwindles to offshore islands
That now in the pallor of the unmoving waters
Have lifted and hang against the stagnant sky.

And here we, not going after all to the islands,
And here, hedged on the ruined beach and hemmed
By a scuttled world, we burn a hole in the night
And with our bodies warm a cave in the cold.
It is only our minds that believe in the end of the world.

The LIFE

by Leane Zugsmith

Miss Zugsmith, a Kentuckian by birth, now makes her home in New York. She is the author of five novels, *All Victories Are Alike*, *Goodbye and Tomorrow*, *Never Enough*, *The Reckoning*, and *A Time to Remember*, the last named being reviewed in the present FANTASY. Her short stories have appeared in *Scribner's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Vanity Fair*, and countless other journals; a book collection of them appears this month under the title *Home Is Where You Hang Your Childhood*.

OF all the ladies in her crowd, Carrie Ballou was singled out for genuine deference. Merely to see her walking down the street was impressive. Tall and portly, her shoulders back and her bosom forward, she held her arms in rigid curves away from her sides. In another woman, this would have suggested such firm corseting that all unwanted swellings had sought refuge in her arms; in Carrie, it was majestic. Her face wore the defiant expression common to women who have become large in middle life and who, regarding their increased girth as a temporary state, challenge strangers to call them stout. Carrie was fifty-four and looked younger than any of the ladies, whose ages ranged from fifty to sixty.

A few in the crowd still had husbands; most of them were widowed;

only Carrie was divorced. It seemed fitting, often enviable, that she should receive a robust alimony from her former husband. Carrie paid less for a large room on the tenth floor of a good hotel than the other ladies for fewer advantages. On the night, each month, that the ladies got into their black lace dinner gowns and went to dinner before theatre, it was Carrie who knew the kind of cocktail they should sip and the play they should attend.

The ladies copied her clothes which they suspected cost far less than their own, since Carrie refused to give them the name of her seamstress. When it was Carrie's turn to give the semi-monthly luncheon she managed, even at a hotel, to produce some tasty new dish. At the regular Tuesday and Friday bridge games, -Carrie, either by her

The Lie — continued

playing or her conversation, seemed set apart from the others. And, although the ladies had known her, as they had known one another, for years, back to the days when they had all been youthful matrons discussing together the derelictions of their husbands, their children and their servants, they went to Carrie with their problems. Sometimes her counsel was not followed, but always it was sought. Some of the ladies maintained that Carrie had a kind of second sight; as many asserted that Carrie had that rare thing called common sense. Only one or two said nothing at all.

Sitting now at the desk in her hotel room, Carrie's posture, even in solitude, was regal. She was gowned for the bridge game at Adele Peet's this afternoon. If the ladies could have seen her manipulating the dog-eared cards before her, they would have supposed that she was dealing herself trial hands. She was not. She was telling her fortune. Regular in her habits—she rose at a certain hour, breakfasted, took a walk, went to an early-bird matinee, lunched, kept her afternoon appointments—she never let a day pass without consulting her cards. Yet no one had ever learned about this practice of hers.

The method by which she told her fortune was complicated. It entailed different kinds of shuffling, ways of choosing cards, arrangements in patterns that called for a marriage-bed, to-your-house, to-your-heart, to-your-purse, as well as more subtle combinations. When one of the ladies asked Carrie for advice, she referred mentally to what the cards had revealed that day. When picture cards turned up in the arrangement, Carrie could identify them. Now, as she saw the "lie" card in conjunction with a pic-

ture card representing a tall, middle-aged woman with light, perhaps grey-streaked hair, she knew at once that it was Dora, one of the few ladies in the crowd whom Carrie had never liked. Dora would be playing this afternoon. Well and good, thought Carrie, forewarned is forearmed and I'll be on the watch-out for that one and her falsehoods.

AS she placed the next card, she heard a knock at the door. Carrie's vexation was undisguised. All her friends knew that they must call from the lobby before coming up. To be compelled to scramble the cards and dump them into the desk drawer further irritated her. On opening the door, her displeasure was increased to discover that the unannounced visitor was Miss Woolley, the seamstress, who *knew* that she was engaged only twice a year, in the spring and in the fall.

"This is a surprise," said Carrie icily.

Miss Woolley fumbled with her handbag. She was a tall, gaunt woman with a red nose and spectacles over her nearsighted eyes. "I just thought I'd happen in, Mrs. Ballou, I didn't mean to interrupt you if anything . . ." She looked unhappily at Carrie.

"You certainly did interrupt me. You know that I never permit *any* one to come up without phoning," said Carrie. "Only now that you're here, you may come in."

Miss Woolley seated herself on the edge of the straight desk chair. "I just happened in," she said in a low voice, "on account of I thought maybe you had some work for me, perhaps."

"Now, you should know better than that." Carrie's tone was reproving. "I have you in October and I have you in March. When

have I ever had you in between times?"

In miserable accord, Miss Woolley nodded her head several times. "I only thought," she said.

"Now, if that's all that's on your mind, look up your appointment book and plan to be here prompt on March first as was agreed."

But Miss Woolley did not rise. "Then I thought maybe some of your friends—" she kept her near-sighted gaze on her handbag—"maybe they need some one."

Carrie pursed her lips. For five years, she had concealed Miss Woolley from the ladies, knowing full well that once they got hold of her, the woman's head would be turned and, from charging only three dollars a day, she would soon be asking for five, even seven. The situation had not altered. "I'm afraid they all have their own seamstresses, that is, those who don't buy their clothes readymade." As a warning, she added. "Most people prefer to get their clothes readymade."

Miss Woolley nodded her head several times. Then she stood up. "Mrs. Ballou, I hardly know how to say this," she said, her eyes fixed on the door, "I—my sister's in the hospital with an operation and all and I—neither of us got the money to pay for it. I wondered if, just as a loan, I'd pay it back." Now she looked straight at Carrie, her spectacles misted, her face wretched. "Could you manage to lend me some money?"

Her lips pursed once more, Carrie looked at the seamstress. Frontal attacks on her purse usually found her prepared. She did not believe in lending or giving money; her time, yes, her advice, yes. But this was a new situation and, as she tried to cope with it, she reverted to her cards whose complete message had

been interrupted by this visit. Her mouth relaxed as she remembered the "lie" card. With Miss Woolley before her, she could see how tall she was, how middle-aged and how streaked with grey her hair. This was the one, not Dora, who today would tell her the falsehood.

Levelly she spoke. "I don't seem to recall your ever speaking of a sister, Miss Woolley."

The seamstress replied too quickly. "Oh, on account of she hadn't been sick before."

Carrie smiled sadly. "Look me straight in the eyes, Miss Woolley, and repeat that *you have a sister who is in the hospital.*" And she almost barked: "Which hospital?"

Miss Woolley removed her spectacles and looked at Carrie with dog's eyes. "I can't say it," she said in a choked voice. "I haven't any sister."

"And you thought by telling me an untruth, you could gain your ends?"

"I need the money, I need it something awful," Miss Woolley said desperately. "I only thought maybe if I made it sound—some one sick, you know."

"No, I don't know. All that I know is that no one gets any place without telling the truth. You cannot expect any one to do anything for you if you deceive them all the time."

"I didn't mean to." Miss Woolley made a snuffling sound. "I need it so bad."

"Tell the truth always! Always tell the truth! Now, I don't harbor grudges, Miss Woolley. I expect to see you in March as was agreed but I advise you for your own good never, never to let another falsehood pass your lips."

The seamstress nodded her head several times and, putting her hand

The Lie — continued

up to her mouth, made for the door. As her hand was on the knob, Carrie's voice halted her.

"Now, I'm not going to let you go out of here emptyhanded, either," said Carrie.

Dumbly Miss Woolley waited as Carrie fished in her bureau drawer and presently came toward her holding out a slip of paper which she pressed into the seamstress's hand.

"Good for any day but Saturdays, Sundays and holidays", said Carrie. "It's a pass for the Capitol."

She waved away any expression of gratitude that Miss Woolley might want to make and hurriedly closed the door on her. It was growing late. She liked to be punctual wherever she went.

THERE were exactly eight ladies at Adele's, the right number for two tables. Since Carrie did not believe in chattering during the game, she waited until the refreshments were being served before she told them of her little experience. She did not mention her seamstress by name; and she did not remark that the cards had helped her uncover the woman's deception. The ladies looked admiringly at her. *I never can tell when some one's fibbing to me . . . There's no one like Carrie to see through people . . . Just imagine how ashamed she must have been!* Only Dora who, of course, sensed that Carrie had no use for her, asked:

"What's the poor woman going to do?"

The ladies all spoke at once in their condemnation of Dora's point of view. Carrie did not even trouble to reply to her. Presently they were occupied once more with the game. Just as the second table had finished its last rubber, Adele's husband walked into the room. He

greeted them with the fatuous smile he always wore when encountering the ladies collectively, until he caught sight of Carrie.

"Quite some doings around your hotel this afternoon, weren't there, Carrie?" he said and drew the evening paper out from under his arm.

"Heavens, what's happened?" asked Carrie, trying to remember where she had hidden her burglary policy.

The ladies looked alertly at Adele's husband.

"A woman threw herself out of the ninth floor." He unfolded the newspaper. "Here, you can see for yourself. 'A woman identified as Lydia Woolley, seamstress, fell or jumped today around two-fifteen out of a corridor window on the ninth floor of an uptown hotel. Her—'"

Carrie interrupted him, snatching the paper from his hand. She moistened her lips as she read the story to herself. She felt terrible, she had never felt so awful. The sound of Dora's voice caused her to look up from the newspaper.

"That must be that poor woman who came to see you today," said Dora.

Carrie looked from her to the others. All the ladies were looking at her with horrified eyes. For a moment, a new kind of panic swept over her. She made an heroic effort to recover herself and then in a voice, whose tone was regretful, said:

"The ninth floor. That must be Mrs. Dakin's seamstress, she's been after me to try her out. Terrible, isn't it?" She watched their shocked faces become natural. "I'll stop in at Mrs. Dakin's on the way up to my floor and find out all about it for you," she said and began to add up the bridge score.

THE HOUND WHO SAVED THE ENEMY

KENNETH PATCHEN

Down the skies that great red tongue
Lashes out!

The wheels go round! His bloody feet
Spin on the treads of this horrible mill.
We are

drawn by the cries of our people
Who die in the crush of cities as they are trampled on:
We spin
under the drive of his monstrous breath!

His shaggy coat smothers the fires which have been placed
In these hills by those who have been proud of this earth.

Who are the friends of this 'kinless mongrel'!*

Who holds his forlorn tail straight
in their crooked hands!

Who let this mad dog loose in our streets!

*Reference is made here to the "kinless mongrel" which was used by Alexander Blok, in his famous poem, "The Twelve," as a symbol for the bourgeois.

Portrait of a Man at a Restaurant Table

ELIAS LIEBERMAN

Bill strutted in and found a table
From which his bulk could be reviewed,
For restaurants are marts of Babel
And vanity needs more than bread.

No waiter came . . . the men were busy . . .
(Just talk and music drifting past
As if the world were going dizzy . . .)
His soul complained that it was lost.

He needed most a waiter's healing
Amenities . . . A diner laughed . . .
Bill softly cursed the raftered ceiling;
One neighbor grinned . . . another coughed . . .

HIGH PASTURES

JAMES STILL

Where the mares have fed in high pastures
The grass is cropped smooth to the sod
Hung upon the slopes. The slant herbage of the clouds
Have fed their hunger, and nourished the stirring foals
Doubled in swollen bodies.

Longer is day upon the hills, tenderer the grasses,
Stronger the winds that toss uncurried manes
Above the ridge and hollow.
Higher upon the earth
And free when the foals are straining
Toward these green hills islanded with sky and birth.

EUTHANASIA

HAROLD VINAL

Mourn not the myrtle,
Let the ilex die,
And let the cyme
And the azalea go;
Weep not because
The tuberose must lie
Under the frosty mirror
Of the snow.

For unrebillionally
Each waxen thing
Falls in the instant
Of its muted death;
The crocus sheds
A petal like a wing,
How quietly the orchid
Yields her breath!

O like the millet
Or the moonwort fail,
Let us fall softly
And as softly lie,
Shedding the flesh
Like blossoms, white and pale,
Against the dust
And unafraid to die.

FROM THE VALLEY OF STILLNESS

ARTHUR E. DuBois

I, megalcephalic,
Who here and now am mortal
And for this time and place write verse,
Am lonely for the company of my peers,
Those spaceless timeless seeming Milton, Goethe, Homer.

I
Must somehow win my sanction to turn poet.
And therefore I must trespass into caves of quietude,
Into The Abstraction past the stuff and stretch of poetry,
Beyond the here and now,
For my authority to annihilate the here and now my prison are,
To get me in The Company always everywhere.
And Sleep, the absence of rhyme,
And Death, the absence of reason,
My sole acquaintance with the abstract folk,
Must therefore be my guides to Time and Space all poems are
And beyond them to the Eden of the Classic, companionship outlasting
them,
As pagan Virgil guided Protestant Dante to a Catholic heaven once.
Thereless, thenless I must be you who maybe write no verse
And may not be the Dickensian who cannot hear of Thackeray,
Or the black-shirt who works hard and will not hear of play,
Or the free-versifier who will not stand a rhyme,
Evangeline, Whitman, Shelley, is it not so?

II

The willow and cypress sway in no wind at all,
Etiolate like celery beneath a half-moon sky,
And the laurel leaf is white,
And the acacia—there is none.

III

God—there!
Why must we cut our only friends we must,
Who loved us and lived for us here and there,
St. Francis, Erasmus, Shakespeare, Calvin, Luther,
St. Jude, Rabelais, Fielding, or Voltaire?
Why must we violate our brotherhood we must
With Tom and Dick and Harry for St. Paul,
With Frankie, Johnny, or poor Nell, or Marx for the Social Registerite?
Or, Protestant or Catholic, why must we curse we must
Curse ex cathedra those who do not bear our name?
Why must we kiss the flag and swear we must
Allegiance to the Constitution who know it may be amended,
Who love the schools and colleges, cities and towns, Niagaras, Grand
Canyons, Lees and Lincolns, the American not always brave or free?
Quaked, the Arch-Pastor, rock like Peter, said:
I will be priest to Death alone and minister to his only needs,
Who shall hear your confessions as I have heard his,

From the Valley of Stillness—continued

Who has cast their shadow on the wall,
The rock I am forever,
For God-then, Master Sculptor, to carve at will,
Who over-cuts his first Cro-Magnon silhouette by being
God-then, ultimate Genius,
As Shakespeare therefore was Elizabethan once and once Victorian.

Then the Arch-Pastor, God-there, said again:
I am priest to Death alone and minister to his only needs,
Who has cast their shadows on the wall I am.
Have you seen the shadows of a gibbet or a cross?
A swastika? a stake with faggots round? an Iron Maiden?
Or maybe you have seen a penitentiary and a cell block
And heard the turn of iron key in iron lock, once, twice, three times,
maybe?

Look! here is the Inquisition, the Catacombs, a Pogrom, the Salem witch
trial, a chain gang, the Ku Klux Klan in hoods, the Scottsboro trial,
St. Bartholomew's Day in France, St. Valentine's Day in Chicago
the Red Square, a Picket with smashed-in head . . .

One must have something to confess or God-then,
Master Sculptor,
Can find no hard lines which alone cast shadows to cut:
And so, Nero;
Therefore, Ford;
Consequently, Jonathan Edwards;
And Anthony Comstock and the Blues
And everybody collecting dues
So somebody can make *Who's Whos*.

IV

God-then, Maestro, elite Genius, sculptor, architect!
How shall we know that men are mortal and that you,
The Artist, are
Not what you seem at all,
Who form and fashion us, and chisel us down,
Till we, who know ourselves, no longer know ourselves,
Finding us perfect, finished, beautiful, Phidian?
Truth that is Beauty on a master-urn,
Lost in the past we never had,
Unlike us as we saw ourselves asleep or dead!
We journeymen, and we apprentices,
Would carve our master-statue too, our master-urn,
But you,
You will not let us imitate and create,
But we must always tear our buildings down
And we must always break our statues up.
Why must we shatter our idols all we must,
In pieces, small and meaningless, of jagged stone,
Pound into rocks those precious portraits of us we have hewn,
Those idols of the cave or marketplace, of tribe or theatre?
Why must we hack and batter to undistinguished bits we must
Those marble, granite blocks like death we have endowed
With life, the life-blood of our hardest, rarest, and most labored spirits,
Have cut to nostrils and then, in them, blown

Our very breath, our last and very breath?
Why must we tear our idols down we must
And plough the every pieces into the land—
Bradford, Winthrop, Franklin, Jefferson!
(But for Roger Williams, Thomas Morton, and poor Richard),
Warm at a logfire in the winter, ugh!
Fed with corn meal, thankful, ugh!
Stealing for man fire from the sky, ugh!
Daring assert the rights of man, ugh!
And yet becoming President, ugh, ugh, ugh!
. . . And grind their every images into sand?
Masters but for Lincoln, and Sandburg and Lindsay!
Lee but for the Slave! Whitman but for Mrs. Whitman!
Lincoln but for Lee!

The Maestro said:
I, megaloccephalic,
Am the artist,
I
Will have one journeyman ever who is Death,
And he may never be my colleague, Master Genius, for
He cannot understand,
And you, my millions of apprentices, may never understand,
The art is fluent like a river and
Death, form or beauty, is the ice congeals the art.
The Master Artist is the Master Wrecker,
I,
The Must-have-been, my poor apprentices:
The Lost Chord is a discord Wagner dares,
Heard round the world.

And the Maestro also said:
But the human show is good, as we who are immortal work it out.
Go back,
Go write us back how good and funny it is
Here and there,
Now and then . . .
That's how the fun comes in.

I speak for God-there, and we who are eternal are not less than men:
We take home to our bosoms those who praise our work, not those
who do it—

Hardy, Vice President of the Immortals, Sportsman,
Erasmus, Praiser of Fools, Utopian,
Stephens, demi-god who will die,
And Shakespeare, Shelley, Burton, Fielding, Peacock, Browning,
Gilbert, Rabelais, Cervantes, Keats, Carlyle, Jane Austen, Meredith,
even James Russell Lowell, and the rest by other names
as sweet.

Go back and laugh at Job and all the little Jobs midway
Between Absolutest Monarchist and Freethinking Anarchist, as
Republican, Democrat, Socialist, Communist,
Between voodoo worshippers of the Sun and atheists, as Jew, Catholic,
and Protestant . . .

From the Valley of Stillness—continued

V

And then The Voice whispered as it were a moving picture:

Jane Porter, the spinster, loveless loved
Scottish Chieftains, and sat by her fire,
The back of her cold and the front of her warm,
Making them speak noble sentiments softly to the women, of the
land, they loved.

And at another English fire sat Emily loveless,
Sat up for Heathcliffe, fierce Byronic, scaring the back of her warm
and the front of her cold.

And, back there, alone and loveless, your friend Angie slipped over
the side of a boat into the wet one Mediterranean night,
All over cold.

And you, too, one New York summer picked the pink and green and
yellow quartz-things from the grey and common shale
To make a mosaic on the shore of Skaneateles the waves must wash
away next spring,

You, megalocephalic and six foot long!

William Macready, actor, who remembers him?

Headlines:

Yesterday, in the presence of the entire cast at rehearsal, William
Macready, leading Shakespearean actor of our times, got his face
slapped by another actor who thought himself under-cast. Many
years ago, when first he came to London, Macready himself made
news by slapping his manager's face for the same reason.

Out beyond the New Republic, fifty miles from Utopia,

East of the New Atlantis, and west of Oceana,

North of Eldorado, south of the Internationale,

Near Limbo in a crystal age,

Through the wasteland and across the drawbridge of the dark tower,

To these caves of quietude comes Keats, looks out upon the worlds of
Beauty and Truth below and they look alike so far away;

To this mid-region of the Weir comes Poe, looks down upon the worlds
of life and death below, and from this Dreamland they look alike so
far away;

To this outside edge comes Morley, looks down upon the worlds of trag-
edy and comedy below and the stages the world is look alike so far
away;

To this Valley of the Shadow Shelley, pursued by the Spirit of Solitude,
comes too, looks down upon the worlds of saint and sinner below, and
they look alike so far away;

To this Valley of Stillness Masters comes, looks down upon the worlds
of this and that and now and then, and finds them here and there so
far away;

To this Black Night of the Soul come Edna Millay and St. Teresa, scorn-
ful sisters, look down upon the worlds below, one sees herself and one
sees God, who hold the East and West apart;

To this sunny Pleasure Palace built of ice comes Coleridge, looks down
upon the worlds of the past and of the future below, and hears an-
cestral voices prophesying—

Me, I know nothing—

Sometimes my name is Pippa, and I pass;

by Arthur E. DuBois

Sometimes my name is Elenor Murray, and I riffle;
I have been a rock somebody threw a thousand years ago you stumbled
over;

And, stronger than Conrad's word or Archimedes' lever, I shall move
mountains and sprout wings on man—

Me, I know nothing—

In the land of The Happy Valley, Italian and Ethiopian kill each other,
and Johnson and Voltaire laugh up your sleeve together,

And Jefferson, how he . . .

And Marx, how also he . . .

And Christ, how even He . . .

In Potters' Field the strangers lie.

They brought you tales to illustrate, dyes to use, and forms to mould,

Barbaric from the north,

Pagan from the south,

Heathen from the west,

Gentile from the east.

And you bought them this field, your rubbish pile as artists,

For the bodies scarcely cold,

By the agency of your priests,

Through the treachery of your colleague,

According to your prophecies,

With twenty pieces of silver.

Go back!

Over there is Circe's Island,

But we think: Let Gryll be Gryll.

Over there is the Palace of Art—

Where death is, death must kill.

Ahead is a mountain stratified, overlooking time and place.

VI

And so, now, I am returned from The Abstraction,

My poem, if unwritten now what matter? in my heart,

To laugh it out with Tom and Dick and Harry

And at the ists and ers the massed nobodies are.

And I shall gather a horde of stones and bricks to throw

At all the ists our best is maybe, in their glass houses thoughtless,

Or artists,

Tomorrow not.

It seems one must have something to confess.

Back there, the willow and the cypress sway in no wind at all,

Etiolate like celery beneath a half-moon sky.

And Lenore I saw there had no breasts, but violet eyes I never can re-
member.

Here, from this mountain, not Darien,

Balboa first looked down upon the spreading Pacific below,

Where Lusitanians, Titans, Atlanteans have gone down,

Looked down and laughed.

Somehow, Teufelsdröck, I have climbed,

And how small your funny attic looks from here!

Greenlaw! ghost of this place, I have acquired a Baconian view of the
worm,

From the Valley of Stillness—continued

Remembering what is vermiculate.
Meredith! its prophet, this is not Olympus, but the Muses sing.
Eve! off with your figleaf!
Beatrice! your veil!
One reaches India by sailing east.
Beauty need not fear itself, and the Beast,
God-there, God-then, The Voice, but for Man, is tame
If flattered with another name, as
Wine,
Woman,
Song!
It kills and will not shame.

COMPANIONED BY PEACE

JAMES MCBRIDE DABBS

I recall a summer evening in the dim
Distance of youth. Thunder, receding, rolled
Even as I read how, "on the horizon's rim,"
A storm recedes. In my heart a bell tolled.
Again, three summers since, the scenes unfold
And find me leaning by the darkening pane,
Striving with anxious heart and mind to hold
The dying thunder, and the bell-like rain,
And life with all its joy and all its pain—
In vain, in vain. Tonight, with empty hands,
I hear the thunder die away again,
Going as life has gone to other lands,
Leaving me here within the lamp's pale rose,
Companioned now by peace that never goes.

PASTORAL FOR DEATH

AUGUST DERLETH

I hear the thin edge of your voice with birdsound now:
bob white and towhee: and the crickets' song:
it runs along the side of hill where the forsaken plough
lies fallow: it has not long
to last with day: clouds mount the western sky,
the sun is low—
afterward your voice's sound will die
to echoes down the row
of years: who will be there?
flesh gone: the small round breasts, proud eyes and smile,
even the quiet air
of sureness gone the last long mile.
I too, I too will follow home
beneath the clay, the loam.

Hart Crane:

PINDAR OF THE MACHINE AGE

(1 8 9 9 - 1 9 3 2)

by Harlan Hatcher

Mr. Hatcher is professor of English at Ohio State University, having been educated there and at the University of Chicago. He is the author of two critical books, *The Versification of Robert Browning* and *Creating the Modern American Novel*; and three novels, *Tunnel Hill*, *Patterns of Wolfpen*, and *Central Standard Time*, the last named being published this spring. He is in his thirty-eighth year. In justice to Mr. Hatcher, we wish to say that his study of Hart Crane has been in our hands for the past year, and made from his own inspection of the Crane letters, in advance and independent of the recently released Crane biography which drew upon the same letters.

The decade of the Twenties has been thrown into perspective with unusual promptitude. The confusing contours of that period are already becoming more orderly. And the work of the poets, once so bewildering, is now seen in starker objectivity. Hart Crane is a brilliant example. He drowned his body in the Gulf of Mexico on April 28, 1932. That act was symbolic of the sharp swerve in the temper and the rhythm of American life at the beginning of the Thirties. It set this poet vividly apart as a peculiar reliquary of the years between the peace and the depression.

Hart Crane was strictly a poet of the post-War decade. He found little to admire and less to imitate in the older poets of the Sandburg generation. The sensational emergence of "modern" poetry in "Chicago," "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," and "Spoon River Anthology" with their noisy rediscovery of America failed to provide him with models. He turned to Pound and Eliot and the tradition from which they stemmed.

That tradition was, in contrast, excessively private, intellectual, and sophisticated. Whereas Lindsay, Sandburg, Masters wrote for all and sundry of the literate, Hart Crane joined the esoteric post-War crowd who disdained the multitude and wrote for the disciples in the smart and bewilderingly ephemeral little magazines of revolt. He was under their spell when he began to evolve his own mode of statement.

This point is significant. Crane was too young for the War. He did not go to college. Instead, he tortured his body and his mind through long hours at manual labor in his father's candy factory in Cleveland, at the candy store and soda fountain in Akron, and as a candy salesman in Washington, D. C. He was emotionally distraught by his divergent sex and by the domestic disquiet at home. He was forced to revolt against his domineering father who attempted to compel the young poet to labor like a navy, to eschew this poetic frivolity, and to settle into business like a sane man. After his rebellion, he was held in

Cleveland by his poverty while his heart was set on escape to New York or Paris where the brilliant advance guard of the arts was editing the lordly issues of the *Dial* and the *Little Review*. He aspired to publication in these magazines, he began to interpret his experiences under their influence, and his verse was cast in the mold which they favored.

His early models were Pound and Eliot and the new idols of their rediscovery. As early as 1919 he wrote, "More and more am I turning toward Pound and Eliot and the minor Elizabethans for value." * He read Ben Jonson and found there "a husky folk element." He read John Donne and pronounced him "a wonder speaking from my own experience." He read Marlowe and came to the conclusion that poetry was "a matter of felicitous juggling; and no amount of will or emotion can help the thing a bit." A poet must be "drenched in words" to have the right ones form themselves in proper patterns at proper moments. He read Blake and Dostoevsky. He read Aeschylus and found in him "a revelation of my ideal in the dynamic of metaphor." He read Poe, Whitman, and Emily Dickinson. He read Proust, Gide, "and a host of other French moderns." He paid homage to Wallace Stevens for his superior technical facilities. But always he came back to Eliot. He confessed that his own work was more influenced by him than by any other modern. "I don't want to imitate Eliot, of course,—but I have come to the stage now (1921) where I want to carefully choose my most congenial influences and, in a way, 'cultivate' their influence."

It is a tribute to Crane's genius to observe that, among such distinguished masters, his own work bears

*This and the following quotations are from the unpublished letters of Hart Crane to Gorman Munson in the Ohio State University Library.

from the outset an unmistakable individuality and a felicitous personal idiom. He did not imitate. He had his own sense of direction which was, in his opinion at least, the reverse of Eliot's. For he renounced in his earlier years the pessimism and despair of "The Wasteland" and other poems. He wished to apply as much of Eliot's "erudition and technique" as he could "absorb and assemble toward a more positive, or (if I must put it so in a sceptical age) ecstatic goal."

The final phrase is a happy one. It divulges the mood which he was trying to create in verse. He could induce it in himself by wine, by music, sometimes by painting, and once, at least, in a dentist's chair when, under the influence of ether and the drill, his mind "spiralled to a kind of seventh heaven of consciousness and egoistic dance among the seven spheres—and something like an objective voice kept saying to me, 'you have the higher consciousness. You have the higher consciousness. This is something very few have. This is what is called genius.' A happiness ecstatic such as I have known only twice in 'inspirations' came over me. I felt the two worlds. And at once . . . I live for work, . . . for poetry, I shall do my best work later on when I am about 35 or 40. The imagination is the only thing worth a damn."

In the earlier poems Crane attempts to coordinate his reading with his personal experiences in life, art, and music, through cryptic phrases of metaphor and image in the Eliot-Pound manner. "Chaplinesque"—one of his own favorites—is a fair example. He had been strongly moved by Charlie Chaplin's performance in *The Kid*. It left him peculiarly elevated and excited. He identified the material of the photoplay with his own unhappy experiences in Cleveland. It seemed

to him that the kitten in the picture symbolized "that 'infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing' of Eliot's." And as for the inimitable pantomime of Chaplin, it seemed to Crane to represent "fairly well the futile gesture of the poet in the U. S. A. today, perhaps elsewhere too. And yet the heart lives on." Stirred into a creative mood by the experience, he composed the poem to his own great satisfaction.

The singular statement of the poem as a whole, and the occasional phrasings in some of the lines are immediately to be recognized as characteristic Hart Crane. The first stanza, for example,

*We make our meek adjustments,
Contented with such random con-
solations*

*As the wind deposits
In slithered and too ample pockets.*

and these two lines from the fourth,
*And yet these fine collapses are not
lies*

*More than the pirouettes of any
pliant cane*

are pure specimens of the private lode of Hart Crane. But at the same time the reader is subjected to shock to find the poet permitting in his composition such prosaic slag as, "For we can still love the world, who find," and "Our obsequies are, in a way, no enterprise."

Crane's own comment on this poem is illuminating and instructive: "For me, it holds the interest of 'Pastorale' which is more perfectly done, but to me, not so rich. Chaplin may be a sentimentalist, after all, but he carries the theme with such power and universal portent that sentimentality is made to transcend itself into a new kind of tragedy, eccentric, homely and yet brilliant. It is because I have captured the arrested climaxes and evasive victories of his gestures in words, somehow, that I like the poem as much as anything I have done."

He composed very slowly and often revised elaborately. In one period of three months of effort he could manage only two lines:

*The everlasting eyes of Pierrott
(sic)*

And of Gargantua,—the laughter.

The costly couplet remained in isolation until it was later embedded in "Praise For An Urn":

*It was a kind and northern face
That mingled in such exile guise
The everlasting eyes of Pierrot
And of Gargantua, the laughter.*

The revisions, which were many and extensive, were usually in the passionate interest to achieve a more cryptic or more intense phraseology. "Black Tambourine", another of Crane's own favorites, is a good example. The second line was revised from the flat mediocrity of, "Mark an old judgment on the world," to the richer statement, "Mark tardy judgment on the world's closed door." And the last stanza underwent extensive repairs to raise it from the halting indefiniteness of:

*The black man, forlorn, in the cellar,
Sees two ways, too,—with less gay
eyes.*

*There's a tambourine stuck silent on
the wall,*

*And in Africa, a carcass quick with
flies.*

to the more certain and distinguished phrasing:

*The black man, forlorn in the cellar,
Wanders in some mid-kingdom,
dark, that lies,*

*Between his tambourine, stuck on
the wall,*

*And, in Africa, a carcass quick with
flies.*

In a few of the early poems, one is permitted to see and feel the slow struggle of the poet to clarify his purpose and to master and subdue recalcitrant materials. "Garden Abstract" admits us to a spectator's glimpse of the parturition. The first draft was approved by some

Hart Crane—continued

of his advanced friends, though its meaning is confused, its symbols obscure, and its technique thin. The first version read:

*The apple on its bough
Is my desire,—
Shining suspension,
Mimic of the sun.*

*The bough has caught my breath up,
And its leaves
Pulse with their possession
As they mock it.
I am a prisoner of the tree
And its green fingers.*

*Like scimitars
The green leaves shine
Like serpent tongues they twine
Around the bough
Around the fruit.*

Except for the single magic image, "shining suspension, mimic of the sun," the poem is less than undistinguished, and it speaks well for Crane's self-criticism that he found it unsatisfactory. After numerous attempts to reconceive it, to lift it into poetry and carry it forward in content and in form, he finally got it into this pattern:

*The apple on its bough is her de-
sire,—
Shining suspension, mimic of the
sun.
The bough has caught her breath up,
and her voice,
Dumbly articulate in the slant and
rise
Of branch on branch above her,
blurs her eyes.
She is prisoner of the tree and its
green fingers.*

*And so she comes to dream herself
the tree,
The wind possessing her, weaving
her young veins,
Holding her to the sky and its quick
blue,
Drowning the fever of her hands in
sunlight.*

*She has no memory, nor fear, nor
hope
Beyond the grass and shadows at her
feet.*

Of the many examples that might be elaborated, these few must serve to support the point that Hart Crane worked slowly, and revised diligently in order to intensify his imagery and to enrich the suggestive power of his compact phrasings and his symbolism.

Crane was more concerned with the technical demands of his art than with his thematic materials. Certainly he was not a poet of ideas. The haunting sea poem, full of profound suggestions to the thoughtful reader, the first in the series entitled *Voyages*, had value to the author only because of "its approach to the 'advertisement' form" that he was contemplating. "It is a kind of poster . . . and it is this conception of the poem that makes me like the last line as I do—merely bold and unambitious like a skull and cross-bone insignia."

The bottom of the sea is cruel.
And yet, behind the youthful concern with verse technique was the realization that technique is not an end in itself, and that the poet must have something to say. In the most ambitious of his poems before *The Bridge*, he tried with considerable success to unite and fuse into one harmony both these elements. This was the 135 line "Faustus and Helen" to which he gave most of the year 1922. The poem is distinctively Crane, and it is a direct precursor of *The Bridge*, in whose intricate compressions he was to attain his most complete poetic self-expression. "Faustus and Helen" is a splendid indication of the rapid growth of Crane's powers in the early post-War years.

In the construction of the poem, he was attempting, he said, "to evolve a conscious pseudo-symphonic

construction toward an abstract beauty that has not been done before in English . . . at least directly." But this abstract beauty is the result of harmonious groupings of concrete details from the street. The poem grew slowly by involution and accretion. The original opening contained these four lines:

*The mind has shown itself at times
Too much the baked and twisted
dough,
Food for the accepted multitude.
The mind is brushed by sparrow
wings*

In the final version, the four lines are expanded to eight:

*The mind has shown itself at times
Too much the baked and labeled
dough
Divided by accepted multitudes.
Across the stacked partitions of the
day—
Across the memoranda, baseball
scores,
The stenographic smiles and stock
quotations
Smutty wings flash out equivoca-
tions.
The mind is brushed by sparrow
wings;*

He had planned the poem definitely in three parts. It was to be "Promethean in mood," and each part was to contribute the appropriate element to the whole. Crane's own analysis was:

Part I—Meditation, Evocation, Love, Beauty

Part II—Dance, Humor, Satisfaction

Part III—Tragedy, War (the eternal soldier) Resume, Ecstasy, Final Declaration.

These specific themes were to be united with speed, symbolism, and jazz rhythm. In the opening section of Part II he was able to realize his ambition to his own satisfaction. Of this passage, which was not only to describe the dance but *be* the thing described, he wrote, "The jazz rhythms in the first verse are something I have been impatiently trying to 'do' for many a day." This triumph reads as follows:

*Brazen hypnotics glitter here;
Glee shifts from foot to foot,
Magnetic to their tremolo.
This crashing opera bouffe,
Blest excursion! this ricochet
From roof to roof—
Know, Olympians, we are breath-
less
While nigger cupids scour the stars!*

Compared with the speed and syncopation of much of the verse written later in the decade, these lines lose some of the audacity that once was theirs. To appreciate their unique quality in 1922, however, one has only to set them beside Sandburg's slangy "Jazz Fantasia."

If part two of the poem was singular in its rhythms, part three was extraordinary for its positive assertion of high-heartedness in the age of wastage and despair. It is Crane's protest against the general chorus of wailing in disillusionment that set in at the close of the war. He refused from the outset to join his fellow poets in the fashionable mood. He objected to Aldous Huxley's "Leda" because it was too clever. "Modern life and its vacuity seems to me to be responsible for such work. There is only a lime or a lemon to squeeze or a pepper-pot left to shake." On the other hand, if one denied all emotional suffering, as the young Paris crowd was denying it, "the result is a rather frigid (however gay) type of work." He condemned the attitude of the young advance guard who were breathlessly hunting the new: "God DAMN this constant nostalgia for something always 'new.' This disdain for anything with a trace of the past in it!" He quoted with approval the Butler dictum: "No one has ever begun to really appreciate life, or lived, until he has recognized

Hart Crane — continued

the background of life as essentially tragedy." And he went on to say that "it is from this platform of perception that I conceive every artist as beginning his work." But this beginning was to lead on to ecstasy and rebirth, and not to the death and unhallowed interment of hope as in Eliot's *Prufrock* and *The Wasteland*. Crane condemned *The Wasteland* because it was "so damned dull," although he idolized the author for his technical virtuosity. He accused Eliot of ignoring "certain spiritual events and possibilities as real and powerful now" as in Blake's day, and of burying hope "as deep and direfully as it can ever be done." "After this perfection of death," he wrote of this poem, "nothing is possible in motion but a resurrection of some kind. Or else, as everyone persists in announcing in the deep and dirgeful Dial, the fruits of civilization are entirely harvested. Everyone, of course, wants to die as soon and as painlessly as possible!"

This attitude later infected Crane himself and he jumped with all his accumulated discords, despairs, and unfulfillments

where death, if shed,
Presumes no carnage, but this single
change,—

Upon the steep floor flung from
dawn to dawn

The silken skilled transmemberment
of song.

But that sad fatality of dispersion and disintegration was still ten years in the future. In this yet glorious dawn, he spiritedly refused to take his place at the mourning wall, and instead he stated his concept of the way of resurrection. "All I know through very much suffering and dullness (somehow I seem to twinge more all the time) is that it interests me to still affirm certain things. That will be the persisting theme of the last part of Faustus and Helen

as it has been all along." The concluding lines of the poem contain this affirmation:

Laugh out the meager penance of
their days

Who dare not share with us the
breath released,

The substance drilled and spent be-
yond repair

For golden, or the shadow of gold
hair.

Distinctly praise the years, whose
volatile

Blamed bleeding hands extend and
thresh the height

The imagination spans beyond des-
pair,

Outpacing bargain, vocable and
prayer.

Crane was so pleased with his effort that he exclaimed, "There is an organization and symphonic rhythm to III that I did not think I could do . . . (it) doesn't seem half long enough to me now." He had visions of winning the Dial award (the editors rejected the poem), and of doing his best work when he was 35 or 40. These revelations come to us now with a touching irony. It is sad to contemplate the career that could not sustain itself into full maturity after a beginning so eminently right in its purpose and its vision. For Crane himself saw that "Faustus and Helen" was only a beginning in which he had struck new timbres "that suggest dozens more, all unique, yet poignant and expressive of our epoch . . . It is to the pulse of a greater dynamism that my work must revolve. Something terribly fierce and yet gentle . . . Potentially I feel myself quite fit to become a suitable Pindar for the dawn of the machine age, so called." In this frame of mind, whipped to madness by the music of D'Indy, Ravel, Scriabine, and Bloch ("Modern music almost drives me crazy!") he began in March 1923 his first meditations for his bid to considera-

tion as a major poet in *The Bridge*.

The Bridge occupied him for seven years. Although he was absorbed in an inspiring poetic task, he seemed progressively to lose his grip upon himself. In his letter to his patron, Otto H. Kahn, in March 1926*, he stated that the poem "is based on the conquest of space and knowledge. The theme of 'Cathay' (Its riches, etc.) ultimately is transmuted into a symbol of consciousness, knowledge, spiritual unity." The poet's quest for "spiritual unity" was at least partially successful in the poem, but it was only a fleeting corposant for his own personal

ity. The mystic symbol of the Bridge, "Deity's glittering Pledge"

Whose canticle fresh chemistry assigns

To rapt inception and beatitude

failed to unite the contentions in Crane's soul. The poems, like the poet, remain at their best a splendid fragment, a haunting echo "of white choiring wings." And as for the tormenting mystery of the ultimate failure of the poet who was once on the firm road, and whose vision spanned beyond despair:

This fabulous shadow only the sea keeps.

*Hound & Horn, July: September 1934.

NOW THAT LOVE IS OVER

EDWARD WEISMILLER

Now that love is over
And has not ever stood
In warm, wind-fretted clover,
Or walked in magic wood:

Now that spring is ended
Without the aching seams
Of parting being mended
Commensurate with dreams,

She who bore love's token
So eagerly through snow
Walks the earth too broken,
Too reasonless, to know

Why spring commands its closure
Surely, when the heart
May have no such composure
Unless it break apart.

AT PAULL

J. REDWOOD ANDERSON

A great wind from the spaces of the West
swept the wild Humber-side: the river ran,
brown, muttering, angry—a forlorn unrest—
swift with the tide, beyond the ken of man
to the far reaches of the cold North Sea.
A sea-gull wheeled above me, like the free
white gesture of a God among the clouds,
and a cry reached me as it died away.
Down drew the sky—fold after fold of grey
vapours heavy with rain, like sullen crowds
hiding and denying God's blue day.

And there arose something—I cannot give
name unto it—out of the sad uproar,
out of the brown waves breaking on the shore,
out of the wind: a spirit seemed to live
within them and about them, and to take
voice in the sea-gull's crying, for my sake.
And in my soul I felt this power arise,
river and wind and gull grown into song—
the shouting and the tumult of a throng
doing heroic battle: loud and long
and tragic music under iron skies.

Time surging on, with its own self at strife,
breaking its manacles with its own hands;
Life for itself conquering a wider life;
Force to its empire gathering seas and lands
beyond all hope hidden in the wild dark;
Faith, with taut bow, aiming at some high mark
lost in the clouds of unbelief—some bright
and splendid certitude beyond the might
of all denial! And within my heart,
no less, I felt the giant arm of Fate
far-stretched beyond all knowledge to create,
out of itself and for itself, Love's great
new universe, where I, too, have my part.

I

Then when we sat in darkness, watching
lights over the river, the stark form of night
out there and I told you, I said then to you,
There is the choice to be made, the choice we must all make
between peace and destruction. But our peace must be strong
and tangible as iron, to be held in our hands,
a weapon, a defense.

I said to you then, my words pounding at you,
(the sounds that I made to beat on your mind)
Love is not music, nor delicate pleasure
but a hard bitter taste, pungent to tongue,
acid and salt as the blood of our parents,
not to be held in delight but in sorrow.
This is our way, we must seize or renounce;
nothing for us but the things we have suffered for,
only this way, for in war there is peace.

These things I said to you, but you were silent.

II

What can I say of you who've gone;
O little boy, O slender girl;
Slim flanks and warmest arms that held
Me ever in a subtle vise.

And pressed my heart to that heart held
In mine, but ever in reserve;
Who kissed so fiercely, spoke and gave,
Androgynous, a mythier way?

Fit symbol for our hearts' long love,
Sterility; our way is laid
Among the lost, we may not find
Our faith in ambiguity.

THE TASK OF PARIS

CLIFFORD GESSLER

Six little girls make streamers of young palm-leaves . . .
Sun and shadow play over their tawny bodies
lighting ruddy gleams in their evening hair.
"White man from over the sea, of the white-winged ship,
say, which of us is nearest a woman?"

Kaupaki, you the bird-quick, the darting, the budded one,
daughter of chiefs, you are the nearest woman.

Riua looks sadly over the cool drinking-nut that she offers:
("Why do you not choose me?" is the word in her liquid eyes.)

Ah, Riua, in five years more, or in four, or three—
how shall I tell you, child of the sea and sun
(*Nafea e fakakite ia oe . . . nafea?*)
Better not tell you, little one of the ripening lips.
Soon enough you will know, when your sun-warm beauty
stirs the spirits of men as none has stirred them
since your ancestress, Huarei, daughter of gods,
drew the Eater-of-Men over the Shaven Waters . . .
Soon enough you will know, little sister Riua.
(Lucky the lad who shall dance with you in the moonpath,
bare feet stirring the pebbled sand in the love-dance—
whose mat your form shall press, beneath the palm-fronds
in the clean salted night of the coral island!)

BIRD BURIAL

GEORGE ABBE

This is the dying, then, the loss of sound,
The last relation to the soil that gave
The food of life? Faint golden throat that found
A joy in song, why should the open grave
Be darkly silent at this final hour?
Twisted within the earth the head is strange;
The wings lie awkwardly as if a tower
Of high, rebellious light, or mountain range
Had flung you from the outer source of breath.
This, then, is silence after wind, the gloom
After the lightning, and the earth at death!
Racer of autumn leaves, lover of bloom,
Earth that you loved is mute; hands you fled
Cover the fallen wing and bless the dead.

DEATH HAS ANTLERS

by Jean Temple

Mrs. Temple, a University of Chicago graduate, is the author of two novels, a biography of Lafcadio Hearn, *Blue Ghost*, and a frequent contributor to the better literary journals. She insists, however, that the really significant facts are that she is the mother of three children, for whom "I cook, sew, and earn a living by teaching English in a New York City high-school. I think good cooking and good writing are of equal importance in the maintenance of life."

THE small paintless tenant house was scarce livable except in the recently added lean-to, and the backyard was a clutter of old buggy shafts, wagon tongues and wheels, ruined farm implements and some rusty broken bed springs. The barn was small, dark and rat-ridden, with lean-to stable. A separate corncrib showed between its slatted sides only a pile of unused harness. But in the front of the house, with its ugly, narrow, half-ruined stoop, was a single lovely little catalpa tree, opening among its green, heart-shaped leaves the creamy, parted mouths of its honeyed blooms.

Young blonde Lieba came slowly out the back door and picked up the baby. She took her over to the watering trough and slapped its sun-warmed contents over the child to cleanse her, then sat down on the back steps to nurse her. She looked over with eyes clouded with ab-

straction to the hillside where Hans was making holes for new fence posts. The rundown farm had to be rehabilitated out of nothing, and the fencing of fields must be carried on continuously along with the putting in of their first crops.

She was confused by her feelings. She knew that it was her husband's brother, Oscar, on whom their lives hung, and his dark misery seemed to draw tenderness out of her as one might unwind thread from a spool. She could see him cultivating corn over in the north field. He had asked to be called at four to go to the station for some tar roofing that was coming by express. It was that now, and without removing the baby from her breast she rose to go.

Oscar had been working in a fury all the afternoon, cursing the clumsy bay when he stepped on one of the young corn plants. He stopped his team at the end of a row and looked

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down the diagonals of husky green. Here he was, he thought, stuck on a tenant farm for no good reason except that he had to get his brother started on it, passing up his old power-line job in the meanwhile. He couldn't see them suffer, but he couldn't stand it much longer. Lieba had a kind of shine about her lately. It stirred him even while it held him off. He turned around to find her at his elbow.

"It's four o'clock, Oscar."

"Why didn't you call?"

"I wanted to come," she said, quite without coquetry.

She waited for him to unhitch the team, and they walked along the lane to the house beside a crumbling stone wall.

"The stove's all rust from the hole in the shingles."

"I'll put the tar roofing on tomorrow, Lieba, if it comes today."

"It's not fair, Oscar. You've got most of the burden."

"I guess I owe you all that much."

"You got your own life to live."

Hans came down the hill with the gaping metal mouth of the post digger over his shoulder. His brother glared at him belligerently.

"Quittin' so early? Finished?"

"Goin' after a few crows."

"They can wait. Corn's too big now for 'em to do much hurt. What you mean is that you want a fool around with your gun."

Hans grinned sheepishly, but he went in for his rifle.

OSCAR climbed into his car and drove out. Lieba too was put out with her husband for quitting work so early. Sharp words came to her, but she held them in, and instead poked viciously at the fire in the little old range. She wanted to have a good supper ready when Oscar came back. A neighbor had given them a bushel of potatoes and

a jar of salt pork, and their employer had arranged a limited credit account at the store till their first crops should come in. If these were good and if they could get the old place in repair they would make out. She stirred up a corn bread and put it in the oven and cut thin slices of salt pork.

Hans came back, nailed up the bodies of two crows on the barn door and had just gone out to milk when Carver, their neighbor to the west, came to take him in his sidecar on a trip to Port Jervis. Lieba knew they would not be back before morning, and that then Hans would want to sleep all day. She protested, but the wish to keep face before his friend would not let Hans be bettered by his woman, and he went as soon as he could gulp down his supper, leaving his wife to finish the milking.

She loved the dusky quiet of the shed and the placid feeling of the cow giving down. She remembered how her father used to tease her by saying that she was like a fine young heifer, and by asking her when she would *come in*.

There was a peculiar delightful rhythm of milking. It had taken her a long time to get the hang of drawing the teats down in regular turn. When she began the streams came down in four tiny metallic pings on the bottom of the pail. Then as this filled each stream made a constantly varied plop, having each its own tone. This minute orchestration in the pail and the rhythmic motion of her hands pleased and soothed her. One teat was usually smaller and drained first; then there were only three separate spurts, and the arrangement was changed.

Oscar had still not returned when she got back to the house. If he stayed away all night, as he often

did, she would be all alone. She ate her own supper, nursed the baby and put her to bed. Then she cleared away patiently and went to sit on the back steps while the evening died about her. She thought of the weakness of Hans in contrast with the powerful, bitter life that was coiled like a spring at the center of his brother's being. It was always the latter who sweated blackly under the injustice of their lives, his father's death and the monstrous futility of his mother's whole existence, and now the enforced situation in which he found himself.

Their present employer was one Phelps, who had himself farmed the place until a small legacy and pressure from his wife and growing children led him to set up a harness and feed store in a nearby town. With all the preposterous arrogance of the lower middle classes he could now be airily patronizing or hearty, as he chose, with his new tenants. And the heartier he became the more they disliked him.

Oscar was thinking of him as he drove that afternoon down the side road on which some of their still unfenced fields faced in a snarl of blackberry vines now white with bloom. He wondered how old man Phelps would feel when he himself pulled out and left Hans in the traces. There was nothing the latter could do very well except shoot. He'd wasted plenty of credit already at the store on cartridges, just to pop away at crows and woodchucks for the fun of it.

Oscar pulled up in front of the Simpson place. Ruby came out and slid into the seat beside him, pressing herself as close to him as she could get.

"Coast clear, Ruby?"

"Sure. Come on in."

"Not now. I gotta get to the station before the express office

closes. I'll stop in on my way back."

The roofing had come and he had to pay the charges on it. He bought a can of tobacco and cigarette papers at the general store where they had credit. He was still there when he saw Carver and Hans pass on their motorcycle.

He drove home furiously without stopping at Ruby's.

Lieba woke at dawn with the baby's crying. Hans was still not home, but she was rather glad than uneasy. She listened to a whippoorwill calling with stubborn insistence from a tree somewhere near the house. She fell asleep again with the baby at her side. She woke up to Oscar's answer shouted to someone outside. She heard him in the next room fumbling for his clothes and then going out with the door slamming behind him. Someone came to meet him, and there was a conversation she could not hear. He came running back and stood at the door of her room.

"Get up, Lieba," he said coldly, "Hans has had an accident. He's hurt bad. He's in the hospital."

DURING the weeks that Hans lay in Port Jervis getting over the amputation of his right arm days and days would pass when Oscar and Lieba could not visit him. The second week in July the haying came on, two hilly difficult fields of a thin, poor crop that must be salvaged carefully. The ridges paled to fine, tight lines in the heat. Only in the birch copses would there be a feeble stir. The hay Oscar mowed one day would be dried by the next. Hour after hour one of the Carver boys would drive the team, and on the top of the load Lieba distributed the forksful that Oscar pitched up to her. Her back ached and her mouth was dry. Dust and small in-

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sects made her back a prickling horror, and she was soaked with perspiration. But her husband's place must be filled, and they could not afford to hire a grown man. The sole advantage during these days was that at night she staggered to bed too brutally tired for passion, grief or thought.

On the night of the trip, Carver's motorcycle had been caught between two trucks. He had three broken ribs and Hans had his arm crushed to a pulp.

The will to a personal life is sooner submerged with people on the land, who are laid open to the unaccountable stroke of lightning or drought, and to the bitter, powerful malice of the worm. And now a stunned compassion for her man left Lieba chiefly the thought in her waking hours of how she could ease to him the arm torn from his side. On the day when the last small load of hay was in she left Oscar and the boy to put it in the barn and came in to look after the baby. Because of the heat and her own overwork the child was being weaned, and she lay in her crib in the room off the lean-to and whined. It was fixing for a thunderstorm, and with this and the coming on of night the flies that could get in through the imperfect screens blackened the ceiling. Lieba drew the netting tightly over the crib and thought that tomorrow she would perhaps find time to mend the old rusty things. She hoped Oscar would not be irritated by the baby's crying, because she had to put something to him to-night, and in such a way as not to rub him the wrong way.

After he had finished eating she looked at him nervously. His lean, ruddy face with its cold eyes was not communicative.

"What do you figure on, Oscar?"

"What are you drivin' at?"

"Will you be goin' away in the fall?"

He waited a long time to answer.

"Looks like I'm stuck, don't it?"

It was his way of speech. She knew that he had decided to stay on. They need say no more about it.

After the haying he gave the cornfield its last cultivation. The stalks were up to his shoulder now, and there would be a good yield if the borers didn't take it. Nothing more would have to be done for it till it was shocked in the fall for husking. But the oats were standing to be cut now. One big storm would lay them flat and lose the crop, and Phelps was rushing him to get it in. The owner had seen for a long time which horse did the pulling, though otherwise the younger brother was more to his liking. He didn't like a tenant to size you up the way the older man did. But he had no kick coming yet.

TO Hans lying with damp pale face in a ward that smelled of formaldehyde the terror to be faced was neither his pain nor the almost certain knowledge that his brother was his wife's lover. In part it was his realization that the day he went home would mark the final descent of a fate that would clinch them all in a vice from which there would be no escape. With the poor to be maimed is to be worse than dead. He had brought upon them all the doom of his uselessness, and than this there is no worse crime in the minds of the harshly driven. Oscar would hate him because he could not leave now. He might desert a woman but he would never desert a crippled brother. And Hans wondered if Lieba would ever love him a little again, or if the touch of his body would be horrible now. But oh, sweet God, how could he do without his rifle? Never to steady

aim and let fly at the white bobbing scut of a doe; never to creep through the brown fallen leaves powdered with snow till one raised a flock of pheasants; never to stump into the firelight with a brace of rabbits over one's shoulder or a string of quail. In the poor stub at his shoulder he could feel the twitching of the fingers that were not there, eagerly curving about the gun barrel. And then he would look down and remember, and turn his face to the pillow in weakness and despair.

It was weeks after his return before Lieba fully understood. In October the orchard ground was a litter of small, malformed fruit drilled by worms, and at night the deer slipped down from the ridges to feed upon them, and dark forms moved swiftly from tree to tree. On these cold, moonlight nights of fall one could see a buck's horns touched with silver in the midst of two or three does, but they could not be shot at out of season and each year the game wardens were more alert. One night Lieba heard Hans creep out softly and followed him. He made for the orchard and there stood off-wind behind a large trunk. The old apple trees writhed darkly, with silver flecks upon their ancient scaly boles, and the air was thick with the smell of the fermenting fruit on the ground. Lieba knew that he was watching for the deer that he would never shoot again, and her heart broke for him waiting there with his poor useless stub to see them. This then was what he was turning over in his mind all the time. And she went back to the house with a tight knot in her chest.

By the end of the month color had gone from the ridges and only the oak trees stood in stiff metallic leaf. The nights were colder, and one rose to a hoarfrost like a thin

snowfall. There were even a few flurries of actual snow. This year it was Oscar who oiled up the guns for the game season. The big hunting club five miles away, one of the best-known in northern Pennsylvania, which in September had unloaded crate after crate of pheasants, made ready to hunt these now. And one day a brilliant cock pheasant flew down to feed with the hens in the yard. Lieba was glad no one was around to shoot it.

Oscar swung down the rows and cut the corn with a short heavy scythe, then gathered the stalks and stood them in the classic golden pyramid of the shock. Hans made cornstalk fiddles again, and picked out on them wee, thin laments that Lieba could feel sawing on a taut nerve somewhere within her. The rabbits were getting troublesome but Lieba dreaded the season for hunting them, which began the first of November.

Hans would lurch one-sidedly along the berry tangles and thickets of sumac with its plush henna flowers with his face a mask of wistful desolation. He would speak of this or that impossible project,—a coon hunt on the next full moon; some new skunk traps; another hound for the deer season. But only Oscar moved through his days with resentment, doubting the powerful malignancy of God and society no less than he dreaded the venom in a rattlesnake's fang. What Lieba and Hans accepted dumbly with sorrow but no hatred he took as the gesture of some vengeful force.

Winter broke on them the week before Thanksgiving with an inch of snowfall. In less than two weeks the deer season would open, and Oscar had Lieba sew a red back on his coat, with the license plate in the middle of it. She made Hans promise that he would not go out. Every

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year there was a death toll in the state from accidental shootings with the long range deer rifles, and she knew that he was still awkward in his movements.

The sparse timbered ridges back of the Phelps place were part of a large estate whose owner had lived abroad many years. It was duly placarded with No Trespassing signs, but in the absence of anyone to demand enforcement of these it became a paradise for poachers. The folk who lived in the region felt a moral right to hunt there, since all summer the deer came down to worry their gardens and crops. And the wardens were too occupied in seeing that game laws were observed in the matters of license plates and the number of animals killed to interfere with unprotected encroachment.

On the first of December Lieba rose in the dark, shivering with the cold, and struggled into icy clothes. A high, thin wind tore across the country with spits of snow, and rattled the dried gourd vine at the window. She crept out to the kitchen and started the wood fire to prepare breakfast. Oscar left the morning milking for her to do and started off, brave in his red, with the sun just turning the opposite ridge to gold. Already the slap of rifles echoed across the valley, and on the uplands dark, wild blood flecked the snow in more than one place. All the slender wild creatures, Lieba thought, here of a sudden getting chased from every direction by the ugly big black-and-tans, with their terrible baying that sent the shivers up your back; the poor harmless deer with their eyes starting from their heads with the fear of it, and at last with their legs crumbling under them at the hunter's shot.

She made Hans come along with

her to the barn, and set him stirring the mash with his one hand while she milked. But he watched his chance and slipped away while she was busy. It was white fresh freedom that he wanted, and the wind on his face. He sprang along a wagon road to the foot of the ridge, and then up a pathway through laurel and rhododendron bushes where he could hear a hound coming closer and closer. At the same time from the other direction came the crack of a rifle, and Hans pitched forward on his face.

BY the middle of January the thermometer often stood at thirty below in the early morning.

"Look, the snow's blue," Lieba would say.

And so it was, massed against the ridges in a tint range from mauve to indigo, as the shadows would have it. The farm buildings dripped with icicles, and a thick diamond crust had to be broken every morning on the horse trough. There were few sounds save the cries of the bluejays flashing around the cedars for their tiny filmed berries, and the resonance of Oscar's ax. On this day it was laid to the trunk of a dead white pine up in the wood-lot. This old tree had been taking up room that it had no right to, he decided. It would make first class firewood and keep them going a long time. He chopped away savagely, wishing the wood were tougher than it was, glad for the exultation of the fall when it should come. But the pine did not go down with the mighty protest of a tree with a living heart in its body. Rather, it toppled over with the submission of an old weak man of whom one has taken an unfair advantage, splintering its ancient, brittle skeleton against the laurel on the slope. Tomorrow Carver would come and give him a hand sawing

it up into lengths for splitting.

He moved about the lot picking out stumps that he would blow up with a bit of powder and marking small wood that could be cleared away. A cluster of young birches drooped in silver fragility with their weight of snow, delicate and dappled as fawns in the sunlight, and wintergreen berries were like goutts of blood beneath the feet of this dark, scowling man. But he had eye only for those things which served his present purpose. And that was one of destruction. This suited him much more than messing about the fields. It was something like the power-line job, when they had blown and chopped out a pathway over sheer wilderness for their shining cable of fire. That work, with the precision of its ruthlessness, had satisfied him in some deep way that he could not have explained. There was the brutality of good clean purpose in it, not the ugly, witless malevolence of chance.

And it kept him up out of Lieba's way. She had moved about heavily, passion numbed like a cricket stilled in some cold, dark crevice, ever since the day two strangers carried the dead man into the kitchen. The inquest had of course quickly established it as a case of accidental shooting, either at the hands of a hunter who abjectly cleared away when he found his mistake, or more probably by a stray bullet, the one found being from the customary long range deer rifle. It was a casualty that happened every year somewhere in the region, and there had been many men hunting within a reasonable distance from the scene of the accident. But that was no comfort for a woman to take to her heart.

He worked in the wood lot till sundown, clearing out some small wood for the kitchen fire while a

few flakes drifted down from time to time. He would be later than usual with the barn work, but it looked like a storm ahead and they must not be short of fuel. When at last he came down it was necessary to light a lantern. There was a strong odor of skunk about the place. He entered it at a certain point on the snowy path to the barn as though he parted a tangible film of curtain, and pushed about through it in his work of bedding the horses for the night with clean straw. But the homely, familiar musk troubled him not at all, indeed was scarcely noticed by him. For he was held in a black possession from which he could not free himself, the sickness of his desire to have Lieba, for which he could find no solace in Ruby's embrace.

WHEN the stalls were ready for the night he filled the mangers with hay and went to do the milking. The cow resented him, being used to Lieba before cold weather set in, and held up her milk.

"A cow's like a woman," he had always heard. "When she don't want to let down the devil himself couldn't make her."

He carried the frothing pail through the cold to the house for Lieba to strain into the old-fashioned separator. But the milk never reached the house. For he had gone scarce twenty yards along the narrow path before he saw standing there before him, dark against the snow, a buck in full pride of antlers, who seemed to fear him not at all and who gazed at him with a passionless reproach till the pail dropped from his hand and its contents poured on the filmed surface beneath. For six weeks he had hunted no deer, only to be driven at last to this encounter. And had he held his rifle in his hand he could not have

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aimed it. For that would have been to murder his brother a second time.

In a moment the creature had leaped away, leaving him to stare foolishly at the empty pail on the ground before at last he picked it up and staggered into the kitchen.

"Slipped on a patch of ice. No milk tonight," was all he said to the woman standing nervelessly over the range.

He sat down at the table heavily

and covered his face with his hands, moving these up and down in the curious rhythm of perplexity. Lieba set his plate in front of him.

"Carver brought us some venison," she said shortly.

Oscar looked in horror at the meat on his plate, with the thin trickle of red which had followed the knife that carved it. And sweeping it off the table he lurched madly for the door, where he was violently ill.

WHERE NO GULLS FLY

MARY N. S. WHITELEY

She sat alone upon the white sand beach
Lost to the curve of ocean,
Waiting, dreaming, for the tide to reach
Her pouring hands that moved with a seagull's motion.

And like the seagulls lifting from the shore
To dip and rise across the whim
Of salty air, she spread her thought for more
Of the windy roll of sea at earth's rim

To lay in her summer mind against a cold
And saltless winter day
When suddenly her store of sea-drenched old
Memories of sand might claim their hold.

When after summer over, winter come,
She left the sand and sea
To cage her vision in a work-walled home,
Her memories grew to clear intensity,

And on the snow she walked as if her feet
Touched sand, she faced the winter wind
As if it blew seagulls across her mind,
Remembering how sky and ocean meet.

DEATH I HAVE GIVEN HOSTAGES

MABEL POSEGATE

Death, I have given hostages to you,
But never willingly, your sullen brow
And haughtiness of bearing as you drew
Them toward your alien ranks, nor would allow
Their parting messages to reach the ears
Of one who tensely lingered with sad eyes
Fixed to the last upon them, filled with tears,
Convince me that your promises are lies.
Indeed, you gave no pledge that I should hold
My own unharmed again; a muttered word
And final taunt that I was overbold
To question your decree were what I heard.
When I delayed to argue and implore
No slightest sound escaped your fast-closed door.

THE SALMON GILLERS

DOROTHY MARIE DAVIS

Now the full tide swallows the sandspits;
Night in fog-slippers walks the Pacific.
Under the gray weathered pilings the river
Murmurs and gossips, while from their anchorage
Out slip the gillers, foaming the waters,
Dropping their seines in a circle behind them . . .
Like myriad spiders spinning at twilight.
Blue is the sky by the night-rack enshrouded,
Blue the Columbia, like polished metal,
Blue are the hills with Astoria hidden . . .
Deepening, darkening, silencing blue!

Then comes a stab from the light on old North-head,
Flame darting out for a second. Again
Blue over all till the flash like a poinard
Stains the Columbia briefly, is gone.
As at a signal a pale golden pinpoint
Wavers a moment over the water.
Then there are others, every seine-anchor
Lifts up its candle, dipping and staggering
On the dark water till all the gillers
Have lighted the torch-buoys, eerily dancing.

I have seen sun-stars . . . vast constellations,
And I remember also the gillers
Starring the river.

BEAUTY MUST BE A STRANGER

ALEX R. SCHMIDT

Can I drink beauty and not give my heart
To man's hot, helpless tears, his empty hands?
Can I from my lost brothers live apart
And feel no poignant kinship, tugging bands?

Can I see my kind last and beauty first?
Can I shut eyes to my own fellows' stress,
And slake my thirst while they cry out they thirst?
Can I love beauty more and my kind less?

So long as man is shelterless and bare,
And, large with pain, must walk forsaken ways,
I have no warmth to hold, no dreams to share,
Beauty can find no haven in my days.
Beauty must be a stranger just so long,
Men can see suffering and see no wrong.

SALVO TO LAUREL RIDGE

I. HOMER D'LETTUSO

Jo Kammeron had never known that Man
was more than flesh or bone or keen desire
until that day at Flat Rock where Laurel Ridge
knuckles the sky and shoulders roughly through
her wooded flanks towards Dixie way . . .
 where laurel spreads a perfumed cloak
 on dogwood, and feathered fronds of ferns
 hush tread of deer—
 where waters run stone-cold,
 laughing and gay, stenciling pale gold sand—
 where tall pines finger the fringes of clouds
 and drop pearl-dew reluctantly from needled rapiers
 to eager grass and moss—
 where pale moons lift shy heads at night
 eying the silhouette of trees then venturing a beam
 and then another as one who wades a water strange . . .
(The ever newness of these aged moons
which knew the feel and sight of all these hills
when Man first sought a voice and rightly feared
the very shade that bore the image of him.)

II

Jo Kammeron stood and the fretting of a breeze
breathed cool against her hot cheeks
where sun had hued a tan
softer than the flush of arbutus petal.

A glabrous web of hair had strayed
teasing the pendant of an ear
until she hushed and tucked it within others
that romped free about her head.

Then light as fall of leaf that drops
from mother limb, the sound of words
now mute through trees, now rising to a height
winged up to her—
only the cadence of the words she heard
as when a lovely song is stirred then quieted
only to return and echo hauntingly
with thrice the beauty of its former garb—
the scurrying of a mouse was louder still
than the footfall of Jo Kammeron's tread.

Close to a pine whose lonely limbs
held eager to a breeze, murmuring
all the while she set it free;
the very nearness of his head to earth
humbled to grass and tree and common weed
was more than she had ever known
that Man could be . . .

and this is what I am and being this,
I am no more nor less than that man
who sees a joy and beauty in all things,
and knows himself to be just what he is.
The probing of his eyes was calm yet firm
as cattle near new water nose thirstily
then boldly nuzzle at its cooling depths.
Those words invoked a strange, resistless charm
unlike the tongue doled out by former loves
whose meager fires were wont to cool with dawn.

And there where Laurel Ridge crowds the clouds,
jamming them hard against the blue dome
fierce with the pride of age, a deep content
scarred the heart of Jo Kammeron.

Truncations

The New England Poetry Society, by unanimous vote, has bestowed the annual award for the most distinguished contribution to poetry in the past year on John Hall Wheelock for his volume, *Poems*, 1911-1936.

John Peale Bishop was born in Charles Town, W. Va., 1892, graduated from Princeton, 1917, married, 1922, and has three sons. On returning from war service, he became managing editor of *Vanity Fair*, and was, for a time, film editor for *Paramount*. His *Many Thousands Gone* won the \$5,000 *Scribner's Magazine* contest in 1931, and two volumes of poetry, *Now with His Love* and *Minute Particulars*, have come from his pen. Mr. Bishop spent ten years in Europe, but is now settled on Cape Cod.

Random House is looking forward to a big fall season with novels by William Faulkner and Morley Callaghan, *Everybody's Autobiography* by Gertrude Stein, and a new volume by Robinson Jeffers, *Such Counsels You Gave Me*.

James Still was born twenty-nine years ago in the hills of Alabama, went to school in the mountains of east Tennessee, and lives now on Troublesome Creek in the mountains of Kentucky, in one of the most isolated regions of eastern America. He began writing less than three years ago, his first poem being published in the *Virginia Quarterly Review* and his first short story in the *Atlantic Monthly*. A book of poems, *Hounds on the Mountain*, was published early this summer by Viking.

John Gould Fletcher's autobiography, *Life Is My Song*, will be published in September by Farrar & Rinehart.

Kenneth Patchen, born in Niles, Ohio, in 1911, attended Alexander

Meiklejohn's Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin. He is the author of a single volume of poems, *Before the Brave* (reviewed in this issue), and received a Guggenheim award in the same year, 1936. He is at present in Hollywood, Calif.

Macmillan promises a fall crop of books of considerable interest to poets: *The World at My Shoulder* (the autobiography of Eunice Tietjens), *The Memoirs of Harriet Monroe*, and the *Autobiography of William Butler Yeats*; in poetry there will be *The Collected Poems of Sara Teasdale* and a long, narrative poem by Padraic Colum.

Sara Bard Field speaks far too fluently for us to attempt a dissection of her letter. "I was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, but taken to Detroit, Mich. when too young to remember. After graduation from the Detroit Central High School, I married a clergyman and went to Rangoon, Burma, to 'save the heathen'. Two important things happened to me there. My son, Albert Field Ehrhoot, was born and into my provincial mind the truth was born that the 'heathen' did not need salvation so much as the whites who exploited them. I saw the spectacle of famine-ridden India, with tons of rice being shipped away from the rich plantations. My eyes were opened to the fundamental economic questions that are now being fought out in Europe. We were forced to return from Burma by my failing health. I lived in New Haven for a time where I took lectures at Yale under the late great Dr. Lounsbury. It was Dr. Lounsbury who told me I 'had the making of a poet'. I was twenty then. But we were very poor, and then, as in subsequent parishes in Cleveland and in Portland, Ore., my life as a mother, housekeeper, minister's wife of a poor parish, etc. gave me little time. Later on, I became National Speaker and Organizer for *The*

National Woman's Party, but that was after I had been divorced from my first husband and my life united to my present husband, Charles Erskine Scott Wood, one of the great men of our age. We went through as much hell for the sake of the great love we experienced for each other, as Edward VIII has gone through, less world-shaking, but not less heart-shaking for us and others involved. We live in seclusion in the Santa Cruz hills". In 1932, the Commonwealth Club of California awarded Miss Field the gold medal for *Barabbas*, as the best book written that year by a Californian; and Mills College gave her the degree of Master of Arts.

R. L. Latimer's first poem for us appears in this issue of FANTASY. In the three years since his graduation from Columbia (where he twice won the annual Philolexian Poetry Prize), he has been too busy publishing other people to have any time for his own writing. Between '34 and '35, he edited the poetry quarterly, *Alcestis*, but abandoned it to devote full time (and, we'll wager, finances!) to publishing poetry books. His efforts in this line have resulted in some of the most notable poetry collections of recent years. He is twenty-six, married, and lives in New York City.

Frank Marshall Davis is thirty-one years old, was born in Arkansas City, Kans., and studied journalism at Kansas State College. He has worked on various newspapers and is at present feature editor of the Associated Negro Press. He is the author of two poetry collections, *Black Man's Verse* and *I Am the American Negro*, and expects to see a first novel finished before this year ends.

If you want to keep in the forefront of literary thought, send to James Laughlin IV for his 1937 prospectus of books from the New Directions Press. The address is Norfolk, Conn.

J. McBride Dabbs is forty and a native South Carolinian. For the past eleven years he has been head of the department of English at Coker College, Hartsville, S. C. He has had prose and poetry in such journals as *Scribner's*, *The Yale Review*, *The Southern Review*, and *The Virginia Quarterly*.

It is a regrettable circumstance that one of the few good choices the Poet Laureate League has made should have been singled out for unpleasant publicity. We refer, of course, to the appointment of Mrs. Mabel Posegate as Poet Laureate of Ohio. We have read much of Mrs. Posegate's poetry, both in manuscript and in her book (which, as we recall, was well received by William Rose Benet), and we see here, as in none other of the state laureates, the mark of a genuine poet.

John Russell McCarthy was born in Huntingdon, Penna. in 1889, "and am getting old enough now to think that perhaps it's just as well not to mention the year any oftener than necessary". He is the author of three books of verse, and a number of magazine contributions. In 1928 he was awarded the John Burroughs Memorial Medal for nature verse. Since 1920 he has lived in California.

Gaston Burrige, our artist for this issue, is extremely reticent about autobiographical material, so we can say only that he writes to us from Huntington Park, Calif. "I have never done anything great or even stirred the village dust enough to cause the good people to come to their doors."

George Petrick of Chicago, Ill. hits us where it hurts when it comes to dilatory correspondence. Writes he: "With the best of wishes for Christmas, New Year, St. Valentine's, St. Patrick's, or Easter (take your pick, depending on when you've gotten around to my material), I remain." We accept the implication.

Poetry REVIEWS Prose

It cannot be said, even by the most cautious, that Carl Sandburg's publishers are guilty of over-statement when, in a jacket blurb, they ascribe epic qualities to *The People, Yes* (Harcourt, Brace and Co. 286 pp. \$2.50), for this new work of Mr. Sandburg's is epic in both theme and length. It bids fair to overcome that which has been his chief point of difference from his great Camden predecessor—the ability to write a sustained poetic effort. For, beginning twenty-one years ago with *Chicago Poems* and progressing through possibly a half-dozen books of poetry, his genius has been observed to be essentially lyrical. In *The People, Yes*, though the approach is still lyrical, and the result a fascinating melange of poetic fragments, Americana, and even a smattering of labor propaganda, the single-minded and grand conception of the work gives us—like a road which takes a devious course in crossing a field yet keeps always in mind the single objective of reaching the other side—a feeling of remarkable unity. It is, in a sense, a considerably enlarged treatment of the longish poem, "Good Morning, America", which was published in the volume of that name some nine years ago.

In reading Mr. Sandburg's panoramic poetic study of humanity—an education in both people and the American spirit—it is difficult to imagine what the poet has omitted. Beginning with an idiomatic rendering of the Tower of Babel, with God, the "whimsical fixer", the "understanding Boss", confounding the language of the people, we view humanity from all angles. We see its noble and its despicable qualities, We are treated to tall stories and

riddles indigenous to the American people, superstitions, and slang past and present:

"Ah there tootsie wootsie," has its day.

till the good old summertime has gone

with the kit and caboodle of its day

into the second-hand bins, the rummage sales,

and another whim emerges in, "Okay toots!"

Here are also collected selective scraps which make up composite pictures of politics, the courts, newspapers, merchandising, crime, sports, the people as worker, gambler, the people heroic and despicable, paradoxical, contrary and variable: *Changing from hammer to bayonet and back to hammer, The hallelujah chorus forever shifting its star soloists.*

Also brief narrative accounts of the mythological Paul Bunyan, of Marshall Field and Eastman, the kodak king, and of Lincoln, always Mr. Sandburg's idol. Personalities breathe life into these pages; periods and social ideas are recounted and recreated. Yet this strange heterogeneous assemblage of facts is connected by a link of genuine poetry.

Hope, says Mr. Sandburg in one of those definitions which so vivify his pages, is a "ten-cent crocus bulb blooming in a used-car sales-room"; and we do not feel that Mr. Sandburg's definitions get out of hand even in "war is 'Oh!' and 'Ah!': war is 'Ugh!'" The people will understand what the poet means, and that is the important thing.

Sandburg is a master of the grand scorn, not only in matters political but in aesthetic grudges, as:

The People, Yes, defines the American spirit and the people in a manner that has never even been remotely touched before. Neither wholly chauvinistic nor iconoclastic, it is a portrayal whose many facets have been touched only separately before. Mr. Sandburg has compressed the local color of a hundred novels of the soil together with sociological observations and a humor truly native, and set them to music of genuine poetry.

In everything save its greater technical freedom, the present is a book closer to those initial offerings than any of the poetry collections which appeared in the intervening years. The bitter and savage war poems which first gained for him a deserved prominence as one of the leading poets of his generation have now seemingly faded into the past, so that now, in *Vigils*, we have only a few desultory shells bursting on a far horizon:

Yet, to paraphrase one of the same poet's earlier lines, it cannot be said that Mr. Sassoon has fully unloaded the hell behind him. Though he seldom—at least in his poetry, for his lately published prose volume belies this—deals with the physical aspect of the war anymore, its impress is still upon him.

The latter attitude is best shown in the following sestet from an untitled sonnet:

Mr. Sassoon's poetry, here more than ever before, shows his painstaking artistry, the ruminativeness of one of Britain's clearest voiced poets, which qualities—combined

with the denunciatory vigor of his war verse—insures him an elevated position in literary history.

It impresses us as being a good sign that the greatest poets of our generation are not essentially lyricists—at least, their lyricism is not a matter of rosebuds and moonbeams. More and more it comes to appear that our outstanding poets, though not extremists in ferreting out the unpleasant, are not above the portrayal of unpoetic current topics; and feel it their duty to tell of them, realizing as they do the importance of poetry as a medium for conveying honest and formative thought, rather than a simple evasion of life.

Stephen Vincent Benet in *Burning City* (Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. 80 pp. \$2.00) shows himself very much concerned in these problems of our time, and grave in entertaining fears for the future. In only one poem, a gay, Elizabethan acclaim to Spring, do we detect a genuinely light-hearted note; certainly the flippant fantasy of the three concluding nightmares have a bitter meaning not conveyed literally. It is characteristic of the Mr. Benet of *Burning City* that in an art which, ornithologically speaking, celebrates only sky-larks and night-ingles, he chooses the lowly sparrow for a symbol—and, closing, links it startlingly with the present: Lord, he says, let me be a sparrow!

*They shoot the wise and brave on
every bough.*

*But sparrows are the last things
that get shot.*

Of our current problems, still recent enough to be echoing, Mr. Benet writes vividly of the Dollfuss Socialist massacre in early 1934, of our crash of 1929, of the munitions-exploited war dead, and in a "Litany for Dictatorships", of the inevitable crack-up.

Of personalities, Mr. Benet includes his magnificent "Ode to

Walt Whitman", which ran in the *Saturday Review* several years ago; and a scathing denunciation of the Springfield that ignored and sped Vachel Lindsay to his death.

We can do with more books of the *Burning City* type, the work of a mind that feels strongly man's injustice, yet does not express it in a spirit of confused radicalism. Mr. Benet's task is that of the interpreter, and this he does with sympathy and vision. As for the Benet craftsmanship, we need read only the few lines likening Whitman's death to that of a plains-dying buffalo to know that the poetic spirit still resides here with the intensity that made its author a Pulitzer Prize winner.

The promise immediately evidenced when Boris Todrin turned his *First Furrow* several years ago has developed into a definite measure of fulfillment with a second offering from this twenty-one year old poet. Though the hypercritic may object to a few of the pieces in the middle of the book—and it is true that several of them add little to the poet's stature—*The Room by the River* (The Black Cat Press. 78 pp. \$2.00) gives us a poet possessed of a wealth of human sympathy and a considerable technical attainment.

We find Mr. Todrin a melancholy poet, but the wonder is that his is not the self-dramatizing and often self-imposed melancholy of youth; it is, rather, the melancholy of an intelligent and well-ordered mind. In certain memorable couplets as "The journey ends when all the things/One travelled for are also ended" we catch a glimpse of the temper which prompts his verse. The "murmureless death of grasses", and the bitterness of the "mornings that kill a dream" are as characteristic of his turn of mind as they are representative of the facility of his poetic expression.

The collection and, more particularly, two of the poems, is dedicated

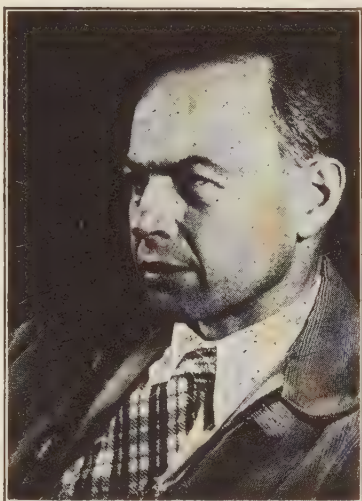
to Edwin Arlington Robinson, whose high opinion of Mr. Todrin's work is quoted in a letter excerpt on the jacket. But it is "Poor Scholar" and "The Clerk of Fire", even more than the dedication, which indicate how deeply Mr. Robinson "planted his seed in the heart of a boy", through an emphasis on character, and especially the character that has known defeat and disillusionment. Though Mr. Robinson is unable to see the further flowering of his young friend's talent, he could not but be pleased with the quality of this second verse collection. *The Room by the River* is sound poetry.

From the vantage point of Santa Fe, Haniel Long issues his *Pittsburgh Memoranda* (Writers' Editions, 87 pp. Limited signed edition \$2.50), enough removed in body that he can see his city in sensible perspective, near enough in spirit that he can feel the influences that have governed its members.

In its general application, it touches strongly industrial America, as indicative of what Ezra Pound once called a "botched civilization". Specifically, the book deals, in one instance, with Carnegie, Frick, and Berkman in the Homestead fracas of 1892, with mention given to Carnegie's "pipe organ-and-library" atonement ("And if a man sneer at these gifts, what has *he* given back?"), and his retirement in 1901 with four hundred million dollars; with George Westinghouse's bad usage by the Pittsburgh bankers; a brief memorandum of the munitions makers; and one of R. B. Mellon's interrogation by the Senate committee on Interstate Commerce. Interspersed appear various memoranda—highlights of Pittsburgh history: Stephen Foster, John Bra-sher, Henry George, Eleonora Duse (for whom "Death had something in mind; brought her the long leagues from Italy so she might die

in my city"); and the Biddle brothers, their alleged crime and escape, with the aid of the warden's wife, a tale whose sordid tone becomes almost idealistic under Mr. Long's sympathetic handling.

Mr. Long's broadly cadenced lines make use of much source material. Newspaper accounts, letters, statistical reports ("statistics are the foot-



Courtesy Bulletin Index

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prints of men in action"), recorded conversations—all are injected in the city's narrative; so that the ultimate effect (as in the Homestead episode, viewed from many points of view) is a picture considerably more accurate than any one of the often biased accounts which furnished its material.

As for his poetic style, Mr. Long has given us an insight into this with one of the sketches in his *Notes for a New Mythology* (1926). The sketch, "How Pittsburgh Returned to the Jungle", relates how a millionaire nurseryman and a window box manufacturer forced through a piece of legislation making it compulsory for every Pittsburgher to have a window box at each window. The result is that the "face of the

skyscrapers began to turn green"; and finally the city, over-run by vegetation, loses its industrial prestige, all business being stifled in vines and flowers. The tale is a fantastic one, but it sounds a warning that Mr. Long's poetic integrity accepts—the danger of stifling human progress in either foliage or verbiage. Mr. Long writes briskly in a combined Sandburg-Whitman manner.

Incidentally, *Pittsburgh Memoranda* may come as a surprise to those who knew Mr. Long in *Poems* (1920) and *Atlantides* (1933). He has always shown humanitarian views (e.g., "A Book on Economics" and "Cain" in the 1920 volume) though not with the heat of the present book. It is the change in style which may surprise some of Mr. Long's readers, a change which has altered him from a poet of lyric proportions to one of epic capabilities.

We had resolved in commenting on further poetry collections of the prolific Mr. Masters to avoid reference to *Spoon River*. But our resolutions were thrust aside—as we knew they would be—upon opening the latest offering from his pen, *Poems of People* (D. Appleton-Century Co. 198 pp. \$2.50), because Edgar Lee Masters' adherence to or departure from the original mark of his genius must necessarily serve as a gauge for measuring his other work.

There is a line which Mr. Masters has written in this present volume which may well be expressive of all his poems of people—and his best have generally been of people: "Oh, we poor deluded people, from such tangled Fates descended!" The tangling is no less apparent now, though the method has been varied. There is still the "Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,/Courage, constancy, heroism, failure" of confused humanity, but the feeling which

prompted "Tick, tick, tick, what little iambs,/While Homer and Whitman roared in the pines?" is not now so strongly in evidence. Mr. Masters' character pieces are lodged within the confines of regulated verse, as successful and more so than any of his many imitators, though they are not *Spoon River*.

Another departure here is the stemming of the new people from Mr. Masters' long dramatic poems, *Lee, Jack Kelso*, and others. The fictional *Spoon River* characters become now figures of historical prominence—Daniel Boone, Washington, Jefferson, a graphic account of de Soto, Martin Van Buren, Meriwether Lewis, Captain Lawrence of the *Chesapeake*, Perry, Jackson, and others.

Some of these are as good as anything that has ever been done in this vein. "Daniel Boone", for instance, taking for its exposition a simple statement of the pioneer's, serves not only as an ode to the frontiersman's intrepidity and woodland skill, but also as a vehicle for the expression of that sense of justice which helped make Mr. Masters' *Vachel Lindsay* so eminent a biography. There are particularly generous words for Martin Van Buren, "Who stood for freedom/When Clay and Webster/Were dealing in oil", and for all those silent and forgotten in "Broad is the land,/And the dead ask nothing,/Say what you please of them/As crook or clown./There's no back answer/At Monticello./At Nashville, Richmond,/At Concord town."

Poems of People is a synthesis of the brightest facets of Mr. Masters' talents, besides a decidedly good way to learn history.

Those who, like Wordsworth, have felt "the weight of too much liberty", and most enjoy "the sonnet's scanty plot of ground", will take pleasure in a splendid collection of over two hundred *English Son-*

nets (Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 234 and xxvii pp. \$2.00), edited with introduction and notes by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch. It may be known by some that the same compiler made a similar collection in 1897, a collection which ended with Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The present edition, though it is not nearly so comprehensive in its recent additions, now carries the art of the sonneteer from Sir Thomas Wyatt (early sixteenth century) to a hitherto unpublished sonnet by a Robert Gittings (b. 1915).

A number of obscure writers here entrance our ears for the first time. To balance them are more familiar inclusions, such as Drayton's "Farewell", Milton's "On His Blindness", Keats, Shelley, Shakespeare and Wordsworth, the latter two taking off quantity honors with twenty-seven poems each.

We are somewhat at a loss to account for Longfellow's presence here with three sonnets. He is, to the best of our knowledge, the only American poet included. Thus, if Mr. Quiller-Couch intended a book of sonnets by native Englishmen, Longfellow obviously does not belong; on the other hand, if English-speaking poets were desired, there is a decided neglect of other Americans. There is no doubt this country produced no sonnets of importance before Longfellow, but after Longfellow it could boast of several. Some of Lloyd Mifflin's five hundred sonnets are as good as any that have been done; and still more recently, some of Robinson, Reese, and Millay. Yet we cannot blame the compiler for a certain caution in too early evaluations.

There is a definite need for books like Mr. Quiller-Couch's. When one reads through the hundreds of sonnets constantly finding their way into print (with the sentimentality most sonneteers are a prey to), one comes to welcome the gleanings of a scholar so eminently selective. We

are grateful to Mr. Quiller-Couch not only for the perfection of his entries, but also for the twenty-one page essay on the history and technique of the sonnet which, tersely worded, carries a wealth of information. And we're grateful, too, for having been introduced to Lord Alfred Douglas.

With the appearance of Kenneth Patchen, the American revolutionary ideal has found a champion to rank with Spender, Auden, and Lewis to a degree that this country's proletarian poets have heretofore been unable to attain. *Before the Brave* (Random House. 131 pp. \$2.00), Mr. Patchen's first book, makes this evident.

But, generally, what may be said of Mr. Patchen's poetry has been said many times over by observers of the proletarian scene: that some of the sympathizers may find its obscurity too much for them and, by the same sign, some best fitted to understand the intricacies of the verse may not see eye to eye with the poet in his appreciation of "the lightning beauty of Revolution".

This is neither intended to be, nor should it be construed as, an unkind criticism of either Mr. Patchen's poetry or his readers' tastes. Mr. Patchen is not to be easily read. We are honest in saying that we do not understand fully all the poems of *Before the Brave*, though we are equally honest in saying that we sense here a poetic importance that is not surpassed by either Kenneth Fearing or Stanley Burnshaw.

Mr. Patchen's is a select imagery, revolving about the symbolic figure of the Red Woman ("the timeless bride of all our loving"). His figures are vivid and violent, as "wind-murdered hair" and the suicidal admonition to "Set up machine-guns over the stale belly-aching of our books". He is a maker of lines which—like "we hear the dark curve of eternity go coughing down

the hills"—show *Before the Brave* to be the work of an extremely sensitive young poet.

In our modern American literature, a stylistic counterpart may be found in phases of Ernest Walsh, but Mr. Patchen is a Walsh who has found a horror other than the horror of war, and a love more enduring in the person of the Red Woman than the purely physical passion which obsessed the other poet. Mr. Patchen's initial effort will be worth preserving.

The reactionary process in Allen Tate's *Reactionary Essays on Poetry and Ideas* (Charles Scribner's Sons 240 pp. \$2.50) does not express the backward and often stagnant condition the word usually denotes. For Mr. Tate, the action may be violent and even forward-looking: "Reaction is the most radical of programs; it aims at cutting away the overgrowth and getting back to the roots."

Mr. Tate is that rare combination of literary talents, both poet and critic. Seldom have the two been more happily blended. Literature is full of instances of poets whose estimations of their contemporaries' work have been as often unintelligent as biased, but Mr. Tate's criticism is neither of these. In discussing a group of exponents of dissimilar schools, he finds the virtue in each with equal sincerity. His critical philosophy can embrace both Dickinson and Pound, Cummings and Millay. It is, of course, possible that Mr. Tate saw fit not to perpetuate in book form reviews and critiques which were too uncomplimentary; but the variety of his pleasures still remains such as to convey broad critical understanding, without a hint of promiscuous back-patting.

Mr. Tate begins with studies of four American poets: Emily Dickinson, for whose "starved life" he feels all pity is misdirected, her life

being "one of the richest and deepest ever lived on this continent"; Hart Crane, here incorporating the most discerning review of *The Bridge* we've yet read; Ezra Pound, who he feels will be remembered as one of the few first-rate American poets



ALLEN TATE

of today; and, most pleasurable to us as being a poet too little appreciated, John Peale Bishop.

There follows a series of scholarly essays on John Donne, who, says Mr. Tate, three hundred years after his death is being felt for the first time as a contemporary; and "A Note on Elizabethan Satire". "Three Types of Poetry", a somewhat longer piece, deserves to be read by every serious student of poetics. In "Humanism and Naturalism", the critic indulges in one of his few damning moods wherein he points out fallacies in the humanistic doctrines of Messrs. Babbitt, More, and Foerster. In a group of five briefer reviews, Mr. Tate is again faint in praise of his first subject, Edwin Arlington Robinson, in whose early lyrics he sees genius, but less success in the narratives; for Mac-

Leish, he is more generous. The group concludes with Eliot, Millay, and Cummings.

But Mr. Tate has two consuming interests, poetry and the South—the former being shown in four volumes of poetry, the latter in two biographical works of some years back (*Jefferson Davis* and *Stonewall Jackson*) and contributions to various symposia. In *Reactionary Essays*, the Southern note is emphasized in "The Profession of Letters in the South", wherein a plea is made for a Southern publishing system, and "Religion and the Old South."

There is only one thing we find to deplore in Mr. Tate's present collection of essays and, in expressing it, we give the greatest praise we know how. We regret that he permits himself ever to be diverted from strictly poetry criticism. His knowledge of matters of technique is tremendous, his judgments always illuminating, and given in a prose which, while sometimes difficult, is difficult only in that Mr. Tate believes his readers of an intelligence commensurate with his own. His prose is made vivid with figures and literary allusions. When he says that "after Emerson New England literature tastes like a drink of cambric tea", we know pretty well what he means. And, another well-planned figure: "Tennyson innocently culled the scraps from the tables of 'culture'; but our dietetics is more self-conscious." Rooted firmly in the past—his favorite poets appear to be Shakespeare and Dante—no critic looks more firmly into the future.

When he says that "*The Bridge* is a failure in the sense that *Hyperion* is a failure, and with comparable magnificence", one sees how definitely literature spreads itself a panorama before him, with moderns not standing out against an indifferent background, but assuming a position within it. Mr. Tate's poet-

ry criticisms are undoubtedly the keenest being written in this country today.

In the *Germinal* tradition comes now a novel by one of the more prominent of our women novelists, Leane Zugsmith, who in *A Time to Remember* (Random House, 352 pp. \$2.00), further substantiates her position as a worker in sharp, modern prose.

Glancing back seven years to Frau Anna Seghers' *The Revolt of the Fishermen*, we see what an immense



LEANE ZUGSMITH

distance in spirit the proletarian novel has traversed in order to reach Miss Zugsmith's novel of the present. The grand defeat of *Germinal*, the defeat and frustration of Frau Seghers' book, become in *A Time to Remember* a veritable cry of victory. Though the path traveled within the scope of a workers' novel is still dolorous, the end is becoming brighter, even in defeat, a very recent addition to proletarian literature.

Yet we do not wish to damn Miss Zugsmith's novel with an adjective

used so often to label inferior, insincere workmanship. In the usual modern novel of this classification, the workers are all martyrs, the bosses all pot-bellied ogres. Miss Zugsmith's characters are not types used merely in exposition of a theory. She is a realist who sees colors clearly, no matter on which side of the fence they lie. *A Time to Remember* is not so much a novel of class as of period, and that period is today—as definitely so as today's newspaper, but one which combines the qualities of the *Daily Worker* and a Hearst sheet.

Miss Zugsmith's setting is new, also, in that hers is a middle-class strike of white collar workers in a metropolitan department store, and relates the manner in which it reacts not only on the participants but on the wives and lovers who also serve by waiting. The strike does not have whole-hearted support: Myrtle Matthews, for instance, suspects her husband's union activities as merely an excuse to be out with the store girls; Stella Leamy despises her husband because he does not take part in the strike, but sells out certain of his friends in order to hold his position in the store; Aline Weinman becomes estranged from her mother and father because of her participation in the strike, and her victory at the book's close knows defeat in the realization that her rebellion against home tradition has hastened her father's death. To some the strike is merely an inconvenience; to others, a purpose dearer than life itself.

Miss Zugsmith's story moves largely by dialogue with an economy of descriptive passages, and a succinctness of expression that indicates her short story mastery. She has a facility possessed in part by Dorothy Parker and Nancy Hale, but adds to this virtue an earnestness and depth which is exclusively her own—a quality which gives Miss Zugsmith a stature the other two

have not thus far attained. She has a decided flare for dialogue, the colloquial phrase, the subtle ungrammaticality that labels the self-conscious social poseur. She has a strong sense of the pathetic, which does not demand the use of lachrymose modifiers. Her effects are all achieved with simple words in simple sentences, with a transition into present tense for the strike scene which gives a splendid breathlessness to the entire episode (and, incidentally, divorced from its position in the text, gives us a perfect example of the collective short story). Miss Zugsmith's gift to the workers' novel is an invaluable one.

Give Us This Day (The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 422 pp. \$2.50) is a novel whose generous proportions and solid worth we fully expected from the author of *Blessed Is the Man*, for again Louis Zara has executed a substantial, life-size portrait of a man.

Mr. Zara this time narrates the rise of an idealistic baker to his ultimate dissolution in a period of depression. The book opens with the Brabant family gathering to decide what is to be done with Charles Alexander Brabant. Uncle Henry, idealist and dreamer, a dentist who forgets to send out bills, wishes Charles to be a doctor; Uncle Vincent, parsimonious printer, wants the boy in his printing establishment; the father remains silent, but is secretly overjoyed when Charles, left to decide for himself, selects baking, his own business. The book then leaps five years to find Charles in love with Cecilia MacDonald. They marry when Cecilia fears she is to have a baby.

As a wedding present, Charles' father buys him a partnership in a bakery. The shop flourishes, managing to survive political bribery, strikes, and boycotts, until over-expansion with the acquisition of a third partner and the installation of

a catering division leads them into difficulties. The crookedness of the new partner and the onset of the 1929 depression are simultaneous, and Charles and his father are forced to the necessity of making doughnuts and crullers in their few rooms, while Cecilia peddles them from door to door. The close is pathetically inevitable.

Mr. Zara has the ability to create characters that live. There is Fred-eric, who rides to medical prominence on his wife's money; a sister, Mary, who enters a convent, leaving Charles forever fearing that it is some action of his which has caused her to take the step; Peter Brabett, a cousin who had anglicized the family name, who becomes State Senator by an election fraud; and William MacDonald, Cecilia's barber-father, who aids him in the fraud. Over them all presides the figure of Grandmother Lucie, another of our literature's great matriarchs.

But it is Uncle Henry who emerges as one of the finest drawn characters of the book—the uncle who had so great an influence on Charles, the uncle whose book labeled "The Book of Honest Men" contained only one name, and that his own; and who finally in despair turned the book into a record of the people who owed him money.

Mr. Zara's fault is a fault common to all novels covering so many years and embracing so many lives. Individual rings are likely to be deserted while the big show is going on. In Mr. Zara's case, interesting situations are sometimes permitted to dissipate in the years elapsing between the six divisions of the novel.

The rising of the bread serves as a constant symbol for Mr. Zara. His bakery similes and metaphors are well chosen, and their usage has the ease of authenticity. But his greatest virtue is a remarkably adroit handling of the family gath-

ering: the only slightly veiled malice and petty jealousies make these scenes priceless, and Balzacian in their accurate portrayal of middle-class life.

With *No Villain Need Be* (The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 387 pp. \$2.50), Vardis Fisher brings to a wholly consistent close the Vridar Hunter tetralogy begun five years ago. From terror-ridden days and nights in the desolate Antelope country of Idaho, Vridar Hunter had passed through a haunted and dismal period of adolescence to marriage with a part Indian girl of his own country. Their intense jealousy of each other had culminated at the close of the third volume in Nelo's suicide.

From the standpoint of narrative, or action of a physical sort, the present fourth volume carries the story forward less than the others. As the book opens, Vridar is attempting to rid himself of a feeling of guilt over Nelo's suicide. He is restrained from following her into suicide by Athene Marvell, the girl for jealousy of whom Nelo has sought death. Vridar, now on the brink of thirty, determines to fight this feeling of guilt and shame which has tortured his life; Athene helping him, he takes his degree and returns to Wasatch College as doctor of philosophy. There his liberalism loses him his professorship, but he finds positions in more liberal schools, meanwhile writing all the time. A novel is accepted, but does not sell. There is a brief affair with Jean Standish, which Vridar breaks off when he realizes that his love for her is only an evasive searching for the dead Nelo. With Athene, he finally returns to the Antelope country, to write another novel, a completely honest one, with himself as the protagonist.

This is the simple narrative. But from the standpoint of character delineation—for in this volume

Vridar completely throws off the shackles of fear which have gripped him — the book is a masterpiece; and, rounding off the others, stands collectively as one of the best things in contemporary literature. *No Villain Need Be* is essentially a novel of ideas, not of superficial and wise-crackling thoughts, but a deeply realistic and usable philosophy.

Mr. Fisher's erudition is amazing, his knowledge of psychology profound, and evidenced in a number of briefly handled contacts. Innumerable characters step into the book and out of it after only a few pages, their brief entrances like case histories from Ellis. Frequent mention is made of Freud and dream-symbolism; in an astute declaration of his views concerning the theory and practice of communism, Vridar declares his personal program to be a combination of what may be true in Marxism and Freudianism. He—and when we use the third person singular pronoun, we may mean either Mr. Fisher or Vridar, so closely are the two allied—also airs his literary views on schools and individuals. Philosophically, he is with Browning in his hatred of the evasive “unlit lamp,” though he does not have the incurable optimism of the great Victorian. His great admirations are Meredith and Swift.

We are led now to the inevitable comparison of Mr. Fisher and Mr. Wolfe. It is a striking coincidence that two works so similar in conception should have been undertaken within a few years of each other. Mr. Wolfe's first Eugene Gant novel antedates Mr. Fisher's first Vridar Hunter work by three years; but now, with the latter's tetralogy

concluded, the other's prospective six volume series still has four to go. Mr. Wolfe strikes us as being the greater prose-poet of the two men (though here we must not overlook passages such as that at the beginning of Chapter IV in *No Villain Need Be*); what Mr. Fisher lacks in passion, however, he makes up by being sound psychologically. It still remains to be seen what Mr. Wolfe will do when he becomes as fiercely self-analytical with Eugene as does Mr. Fisher in the present volume.

Mr. Fisher's is obviously one of the most un pitying of autobiographical novels, and is very likely the novel that Vridar is planning to write at the close of the book. Vridar's intention to strip himself as a character “right to his bones and give him(self) naked to the world” is well fulfilled. His fear that “a few librarians may fall out of their chairs” upon examination of his novel is a statement again out of Mr. Fisher's own experience. (Mr. Fisher and Mr. Wolfe have both suffered the indignity of indiscriminate banning on the part of libraries.) What Vridar is attempting to do—to write an honest novel—has been achieved completely in the work of Mr. Fisher. Though he now and then becomes self-conscious about it, he always retains his integrity. “It's not possible today to imagine”, says Vridar, “even to imagine vaguely, what an honest book would be like.” But we don't think Mr. Fisher is right in this. We think he has shown us. And in so doing, he has turned out one of the most vital things in modern American literature.